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# UNCONVENTIONAL MEMORIES

EUROPE—PERSIA—JAPAN







NASR-ED-DIN  
SHAH OF PERSIA, 1848-1896

# UNCONVENTIONAL MEMORIES *Europe—*

*Persia—Japan* By RALPH NEVILL

*Author of "The Merry Past," "Floreat Etona," "Mayfair and Montmartre," etc.*

*"In this frail world which is a house with two doors,  
Lay no foundation; for the edifice of life passes away,"*

WITH 17 ILLUSTRATIONS

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## FOREWORD

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THE thanks of Mr. NEVILL are due to Viscount LASCELLES, K.G., for the letters from Lord DUNKELLIN printed in Chapter I.

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The portrait of the Shah Nasr-ed-Din, is reproduced by the courtesy of Messrs. ELLIOTT & FRY.





# CONTENTS

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					PAGE
CHAPTER I	..	..	..	..	13
„ II	..	..	..	..	43
„ III	..	..	..	..	67
„ IV	..	..	..	..	93
„ V	..	..	..	..	115
„ VI	..	..	..	..	139
„ VII	..	..	..	..	167
„ VIII	..	..	..	..	199
„ IX	..	..	..	..	217
„ X	..	..	..	..	241
„ XI	..	..	..	..	273
„ XII	..	..	..	..	297

---

INDEX	..	..	..	..	321
-------	----	----	----	----	-----



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

---

NASR-ED-DIN, SHAH OF PERSIA, 1848-1896	..	Frontispiece
		<i>Facing page</i>
CHARLES DARWIN	.. .. .	20
ETON COLLEGE	.. .. .	58
HALL, MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, 1884	..	72
GENERAL DE GALLIFET	.. .. .	104
A SNAPSHOT AT DEAUVILLE	.. .. .	108
THE DOULET GATE, TEHRAN	.. .. .	132
PERSIAN WOMAN IN OUTDOOR DRESS	.. .. .	146
THE BRITISH LEGATION, TEHRAN	.. .. .	156
FOOTMEN OF THE SHAH	.. .. .	168
SALUTING THE RISING SUN	.. .. .	174
A TURKOMAN	.. .. .	184
MASTER OF COURT CEREMONIES, 1888	.. .. .	194
YOSHIWARA BEAUTIES	.. .. .	248
TOIO SAN	.. .. .	260
KIMI SAN	.. .. .	260
LETTER CENSORING, 1915	.. .. .	314



# UNCONVENTIONAL MEMORIES

## CHAPTER I.

Early memories.—Victorian country house life.—London in the old days.—Lady Beaconsfield.—Hyde Park.—The loss of the *Captain*.—The Franco-German war of 1870.—Sedan.—The new Albert Hall.—Berkeley Chapel.—Count Bernstorff.—My first Goodwood.—Lady Featherstonhaugh at Up Park.—Some chocolates.—Darwinism.—Professor Mivart.—Southsea and its amenities.—Portsmouth and its old ramparts.—A private school in the "seventies."—Bournemouth of the past.—Learning "how not to swim."—Butterflies and the New Forest.—Pleasant Sussex days.—Mr. H. N. Moseley.—Choosing a profession.—The kind old duke.—My mother's friends.—Disraeli.—The Fourth Party.—Mr. Chamberlain.—The old aristocracy.—Lord Clanrikarde and his brother Lord Dunkellin.—Letters of the latter to Sir William Gregory.

MEMORIES of childhood are of necessity confused. A crinoline put away in a cupboard—turnpikes with the delay consequent upon getting them opened—mummers with gaudy trappings and wooden swords are among the first things I remember.

The mummers in question, with their play of St. George and the Dragon, I must have seen in Hampshire about 1870. I can dimly recall that they were not looked upon with any particular favour, general relief prevailing when they had gone round to the back door to obtain the refreshment which was considered to be the main object of their performance.

Modern students of social life not unnaturally take a good many old customs more seriously than did those who saw them in full swing. Whatever their position may have been in the remote past Morris dancers and mummers were not regarded with any great interest or admiration during the Victorian era.

Almost the earliest of my childhood's recollections is an oil painting of a jovial looking man in a wig and velvet coat which hung over the mantelpiece in my bedroom. As I grew older I began to wonder who he could be, and one day my mother told me that the painting represented Sir Robert Walpole, her ancestor, of whom she was very proud. Being of an enquiring

turn of mind I set to work to find out all about him, with the result that I learned he was a great politician who had been Prime Minister and for a time the most powerful man in England. This seemed to me a fine thing, but later on I was not so pleased to discover that Sir Robert was supposed to have feathered his nest and built a stately mansion out of public funds.

I had naively imagined that politicians were high-minded patriots, and consequently began to regard some of my mother's friends with suspicion. Since then, however, I have come to think of my ancestor with as much admiration as my mother did. His faults have probably been exaggerated—in any case he was certainly no worse than the majority of politicians of his own or a later age. To his honour he kept England at peace for a great number of years, which is more than some of the latter have done!

Our country house was situated just on the border of Hampshire between Liss and Rogate, a lovely district then quite unspoilt. We had a wonderful garden with hothouses, which people from all parts of England used to come and see.

My mother was a friend of Sir William Hooker, his son Sir Joseph, and other well-known horticulturists, who were much interested in the rare plants and orchids which she successfully grew.

My father, while also interested in horticulture, devoted most of his time to looking after the farming of his estate. Born in 1807\* he might have been said to have belonged to another age; nevertheless he was not at all reactionary in his ideas and inclined towards Liberalism in politics.

As a young man he had owned racehorses and been fond of driving a coach, but in his latter years all his energies were devoted to his farms, while he became frankly indifferent as to going into Society. Though on very good terms with his neighbours, long drives to lunch or dine with them were not at all to his taste.

The custom of exchanging calls with everyone who lived within a reasonable distance was then general, and people drove nine or ten miles in profound gloom and the family barouche hoping to find one another out.

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\* His father, the writer's grandfather, was born in 1760.

My father, however—his well-known and active interest in agriculture serving as an excuse—generally managed to avoid such expeditions. As a matter of fact he walked about all day in all weathers looking after his estate.

In his case, however, an out-of-door existence was not beneficial to health, for though he lived to a good age, during his last years he was never well.

My mother, who was of a very vivacious nature, though she always declared that she adored country life, at heart preferred London. In Hampshire, however, she was happy enough as we entertained a good deal. Visitors would come and stay for ten days or so at a time, for it was before the day of "week-ends," and people were not in the habit of tearing about from place to place as is the modern fashion.

A frequent guest was Sir William Harcourt, with whose political ideas my father was for some time inclined to agree. Later on, however, the latter thought Sir William was going too far and declared that his faith in politicians had entirely gone.

In those days owners of country houses only went up to town for the season, a period which I enjoyed. Among other simple amusements then considered suitable for children, I would be taken to the Polytechnic, the chief attractions of which were the Diving Bell and "Pepper's Ghost"; to the Soho Bazaar and the Lowther Arcade. Then there were delightful walks in the West End streets, which in those days were full of gorgeous equipages, soldiers, Punch and Judy shows, and other sights likely to fascinate the juvenile mind.

As a small child, I was frequently taken out by Lady Beaconsfield in her brougham—she was my brother's godmother, and very kind to children. My mother also took me for drives in the Park, where she drove two beautiful ponies in one of the low chaises which can be seen in some of Leech's pictures. Hyde Park, then a gay and animated resort of the fashionable world, was full of them in the afternoon, when top-hatted cavaliers also frequented the Row. All that has vanished now, the Park, unlike the Bois de Boulogne, having lost most of its social prestige.

Very frequently my nurse took me to see the Guard mounting at St. James's Palace, and a beautiful and inspiring sight it was



then, as with some slight diminution of its ancient splendour it remains to-day. The pioneers have long ceased to march in front of the band. What an imposing figure they cut with their aprons and axes! The drum-major, with his velvet jockey cap and scarlet coat in the style of a more artistic age, happily still survives. The war, which has robbed our Army of most of its gay splendour, has at all events refrained from touching him! This Guard mounting, with its martial display, is about the last really picturesque ceremony left in London, and we could very ill afford to dispense with it.

Sometimes I was taken to St. James's Park, where cows were milked, as they had been in the days when Morland pictured them, and as they continued to be till 1905, when a kiosk for the sale of refreshments was set up in their stead. Cows, it was said, were out of place in a modern park, nevertheless with their disappearance went one of the last links with the days of Charles II.

In 1870 a great sensation, which penetrated to the nursery, was caused by the loss of the *Captain*, a new type of warship which, having turned turtle at sea, went down with close on five hundred men.

In the same year came the Franco-German war, the outbreak of which was brought vividly home to me by perpetual disputes between our German nurse—a good and faithful creature—and a governess who was half French. Everyone seemed to be cutting up lint to send out for wounded soldiers. At first, I think English sympathies were against the French, who were looked upon as an unreliable and frivolous people given to theatrical display. The ridiculous baptism of fire to which Napoleon III subjected the Prince Imperial excited a good deal of derision.

My mother had known the Emperor as a rather discredited exile in London. Hostesses thought him fast, and though he was received in Society, did not much care about their daughters dancing with him. My mother used to say that socially he had always been agreeable enough but as a pretender to the Imperial throne, Society had never taken him very seriously and people were inclined to doubt whether he possessed much real military capacity. Nevertheless the general impression at first was that

the French would win, but a series of defeats, culminating in the battle of Sedan, soon dispelled such an idea.

I well remember the newsboys in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, where we lived, shouting out the news of the battle of Sedan: "Great slaughter of the French," "Capture of the Emperor," and other exciting cries. When the Germans got near Paris, opinion rather veered round in favour of its defenders.

The disputes between nurse and governess grew more and more acrimonious and only died away when peace was signed, after which the former, who was a native of Baden, took to abusing Bismarck as a very wicked man. I gathered that owing to the unification of Germany some relative of hers in the Duchy of Baden had been deprived of his post. Anyhow, she said that Bismarck, with his Prussianizing policy, had ruined her country, and in view of subsequent events I am not sure that she was wrong.

I can vaguely recall the excitement caused by a wonderful new building at Kensington Gore. The Albert Hall of Arts, as it was originally called, was opened by Queen Victoria on March 29, 1871, she having laid the first stone on May 20, 1868.

The design, suggested by the Prince Consort, was carried out by Captain Scott, and the purposes for which the Hall was intended were of a highly educational and improving character, including exhibitions of art and science, concerts, public meetings and balls. Prize-fights, however, do not appear to have been contemplated by the founders, nor had the Joint Stock Company, which raised the two hundred thousand pounds in order to build the place, any idea that such contests would eventually prove its most valuable asset. Boxes on the first tier, to hold ten, sold for one thousand pounds; those on the second, to hold five for five hundred pounds. A nine hundred and ninety-nine year lease of one thousand three hundred stalls could be purchased for one hundred pounds a piece.

For years such leasehold stock gave no appearance of becoming a highly remunerative security. At the present day, however, when a large sum is cheerfully paid for a view of a great fight, those who have been left stalls by religious old maiden aunts, who originally acquired them to hear "The Messiah," have every reason to bless the change of public taste, which has made the

staid old place the headquarters of prize-fighting and cinema sensations.

On Sundays I was taken to Berkeley Chapel, a plain Georgian building just at the end of Charles Street, which was pulled down a good many years ago. Generations of residents in Mayfair had worshipped there, and its congregation was, I suppose, the most fashionable in London. More like a City Hall than a church, I remember that the square pews and old-fashioned cushions reminded me of Hogarthian interiors which I had seen in old scrap books.

The service was not particularly impressive, and I was rather glad when, for some reason or other, we did not go and I was able to look out of the window and see our neighbours in their Sunday best going up Charles Street and coming down again after the service was over.

I knew comparatively few children of my own age, but among my occasional playmates was the son of the German Ambassador in London—young Bernstorff—who was a good deal heard of in the United States during the earlier stages of the Great War. I never saw him in after life.

Unlike a number of parents of those days, my mother liked seeing me about the place, was extremely indulgent, and often allowed me to remain with her when she received visitors. Most of these I thought pleasant enough, but I had an instinctive repulsion towards professional philanthropists or social reformers, about whom there generally seemed to be something slimy. I viewed the whole class with suspicion, and can well remember my horror of one, no doubt worthy, lady noted for her efforts to improve mankind. Whenever I saw her coming through the door I began to howl and continued howling till she left or I was removed.

Another early memory I retain is of having been held up to see the Shah of Persia as his train passed through Petersfield Station in 1872. Little did I imagine that I was to become intimately acquainted with his country and even act as one of his suite during his next visit to England!

About this date, for the first time in my life, I saw a race run. When I say I saw it, I was given a spy-glass and told that I should see Goodwood races through them. This was at Up Park,

in Sussex, not far from us. Here, on the top of the Downs, lived Lady Featherstonhaugh, widow of Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh, a pleasure-loving old buck, who had entertained Lady Hamilton there.

As an old man, Sir Harry, who retained an evergreen affection for the fair sex, fell in love with a pretty village girl. She spurned all advances not likely to end in a wedding ring, and Sir Harry eventually married her. The education which the old buck caused the rustic beauty to receive was not at all wasted, and there was nothing plebeian about Lady Featherstonhaugh, who, proud of being a staunch Conservative, absolutely refused to open her doors to any Radical, including her neighbour, Mr. Cobden, whose political activities she viewed with apprehension and dislike.

At Up Park there was a fine collection of china and also a wonderful doll's house; what with this and the pretty deer which could be seen in the park, it seemed to me a veritable Paradise.

In the country I had not very much amusement, my brothers being a great deal older than myself and no other little boys living near. Consequently I saw few companions of my own age, which I was told was just as well, my health not being sufficiently good to enable me to take part in the games and sports indulged in by children with robust constitutions. My disabilities in this respect I was personally inclined to doubt. As, however, I was not my own master, I submitted to a somewhat solitary existence with a good grace, while inwardly resolving to make up for lost time when I got older.

During the Victorian era, when the laws of health were as yet but imperfectly understood, people were apt to coddle children more than is the case to-day. In consequence of my alleged delicacy I was made to swallow buckets of medicine and muffled up whenever I went out. For a time I was even ordered by the doctor to wear a respirator; altogether I was bored to death with my own health.

The local practitioner, who was always in our house in Hampshire, drew up special rules as to diet, and I was not allowed to eat most of the things little boys like. On one occasion I happened to be given a box of chocolates, the nicest chocolates

I ever saw before or since, the silver paper-coated tablets being enclosed in neat little cases, which fitted into the box just like dominoes.

Owing to my feeble digestion I was only allowed one tablet a day, the empty case being always replaced so as to keep the rest tidy. It struck me that this was but a poor allowance, so as the chocolates were very good, having one fine day got at the box, I nearly finished it off; I left a number of empty cases instead of full ones, but no one except myself knew.

There were no ill-effects. A day or so later, when about to receive my solitary tablet, I enquired what would happen if I were to eat two or three?

"You would certainly be ill."

"And if I ate half the box?"

"You would most likely die."

"But I ain't ill and I've done it," said I. "You will see all the cases but six are empty. I ate the lot two days ago."

This was such a staggerer that there was nothing more to be said. The incident, however, confirmed me in the idea that I was as strong as most little boys, and also made me cautious about placing too much faith in what grown up people told me. I even began to have doubts as to whether what I had been taught about the creation of the world was to be accepted as a literal fact.

I looked across our pretty park with its fine trees and browsing cattle to the distant line of the Southdowns, and wondered whether all I saw had really been created in six days? Then there was Portsmouth, the sea, and lots more of the world beyond! It certainly seemed a prodigious task to have been accomplished in so short a time—no wonder the Creator had rested on Sunday!

The whole question puzzled me very much, but as I did not think anyone could clear it up I said little about it. Grown up people, it seemed to me, were very unsatisfactory in their explanations as to religion. Now if an angel from heaven with golden wings had appeared, one could have listened to him as a real authority! Unconsciously I arrived at the conclusion of Montaigne: "*Quoiqu'on presche c'est toujours l'homme qui donne, et l'homme qui reçoit.*"



CHARLES DARWIN  
(From a photograph given by him to Lady Dorothy Nevill)



After all, as far as I could see, very religious folk were only religious because they hoped to have a good time in heaven. Personally, I doubted if many of them would get there. Outwardly unctuous, but at heart too often hard and austere, while always trying to prevent people from doing as they liked, they seemed to me much more fit for Hell, a place which, I gathered from an illustrated edition of Dante, somewhat resembled Liss Common in a thunderstorm.

Nevertheless, I was not irreligious; in fact I delighted in the beautiful stories of the Bible, which I read with avidity and interest. The question of the creation, however, continued to exercise my mind till one day, rummaging about in my mother's bookcase, I came upon the "Origin of Species," she having been a friend of the author, and interested in his books. My perusal of Darwin's celebrated work soon led me to form certain conclusions as to the Simian affinities of mankind, which a subsequent rather wide experience of the world has given me no reason to modify.

The book deeply impressed me, and, accepting the theory of evolution in a whole-hearted way, much seemed to be explained. So great was my satisfaction that I went about asking people their opinion of Darwin. My mother was rather pleased at my being interested in scientific investigation, but others, especially religious people, told me his books were quite unfit for little boys.

Professor Mivart, a well-known biologist of the day, who, though a Roman Catholic, took a favourable view of the Darwinian theory, was a friend of my mother's and often stayed with her in the country. He was amused at my interest in evolution, but took care not to say anything which might be interpreted as unorthodox.

No one else, except my mother, seemed to care how man, animals and plants had come into existence. The majority said they had no time to think about such nonsense, while not a few declared that a little boy had no business to want to know. Thus gradually did I realize the truth that very few mortals are fond of exercising their brains except for purposes of gain in this world or the next.

In the intervals of reading, of which I was inordinately fond, I continued to amuse myself with toy engines and a large army



of tin soldiers, about a thousand of which I have preserved up to the present day. I also dabbled in chemistry, but my energies in this direction were sadly hampered by a lack of the explosives which I deemed necessary for the purposes of research.

The bookcase alluded to above was, however, my keenest source of interest and delight. Besides scientific works and masterpieces of English literature, it contained some finely illustrated books on Art, the pictures in which were to me a never-ending treat. There were also a few cookery books containing, after the fashion of that day, brilliantly coloured illustrations of the elaborate dishes so popular at Victorian dinner-parties, veritable *tours de force* of ornamental culinary art.

On the bottom shelf were volumes of poetry, all of which I had looked through. Milton's "Paradise Lost" I liked on account of the pictures, but the other poets, though I tried to read them, appealed to me but little. An exception, however, was Byron. "Don Juan" I had been forbidden to read, with the result that I soon knew a good deal of it by heart. The hero seemed to me a dashing sort of fellow, and I think next to the "Origin of Species" I liked him and "Childe Harold" best of all. Such a curious course of reading did not destroy my affection for my own books—"Robinson Crusoe," "Alice in Wonderland," and a number of stories of adventure.

Though on account of my supposed delicate constitution I rarely went far afield, for reasons of health I was at intervals taken to spend a few weeks at Southsea, where there was much to stimulate the youthful imagination.

In the "seventies" the old walls of Portsmouth were still standing. In "By Celia's Arbour," by Besant and Rice, there is a good deal about the old town in the days when the grass-covered ramparts formed an agreeable promenade.

I well remember the Southsea Gate, over a bridge which spanned an exceedingly unsavoury creek which had been utilized as a moat in which, at low tide, a horde of ragged boys used to spend their time catching crabs or raking about for rubbish. All trace of both have now disappeared, the ground being occupied by a huge block of officers' quarters.

Once inside the gateway, closed by a huge door with tremendous locks, old cannon, picturesque casemates and grass-grown

embrasures met the eye. Here were entertained the troops on their return from the successful expedition to Ashanti, led by Sir Garnet Wolseley, and I was taken to see these gallant fellows receive a hearty welcome and enjoy a good old-fashioned meal in the open air.

The fortress of Portsmouth was originally designed on the Vauban plan, and possessed the mysterious charm which clings about Bayonne and other cities encircled by ancient walls.

I well remember seeing a number of figures digging their spades into some of the old bastions—these were convicts employed on the work of demolition. Much history and romance were connected with the ancient defences which had originally been built in the thirteenth century and afterwards remodelled by Edward IV, Elizabeth and James II. Though but a child, I felt sad to see the old ramparts passing away. To-day, only a portion of the King's Bastion remains, most of the gates, however, have been re-erected as entrances to a new and extensive recreation ground.

On Southsea Common, soldiers and sailors came to drill on certain days of the week. I can clearly recall the red-coated infantry in their neat shakos forming a square in exactly the same way as is shown in pictures of Waterloo. Every now and then came the Royal Marine Artillery from Eastney. Very smart they looked marching along in plumed busbies with a fine band playing at their head.

There was always something to be seen from Southsea beach, with its memories of Nelson, who embarked there on his last voyage towards Trafalgar. I was deeply interested in the heroic little Admiral, he having been connected with my mother's family—the Walpoles—a relationship of which she was justly proud; one of my great uncles had also been on the *Victory* during the battle. Looking out to sea, all sorts of interesting things rejoiced my childish eyes: three-masted troopships bearing regiments to distant lands or home-coming sailors in smart white-painted boats making a joyous entry to the harbour from some newly arrived man-of-war out at Spithead.

Romance and adventure clung about the place.

I saw the start of the *Alert* and *Discovery*, under Captain Nares. In those days an Arctic expedition aroused great excitement

and huge crowds assembled to see these ships sailing out on their northern quest.

Southsea does not seem to have changed very much with the lapse of years—one or two more memorials have been erected on the beach, and the moat on the seaward side of Southsea Castle no longer exists, but no soldiers, I fancy, drill on the Common now.

Portsmouth, however, has altered greatly, the whole appearance of the town, which formerly had a happy-go-lucky eighteenth century look, having now an air of smug neatness, quite unknown in other days. About the time it was decided to demolish the ramparts, a new line of earthworks with a moat was thrown up far beyond the original confines of the town, which has now, however, spread out so as almost to reach them, and before long the new ramparts will no doubt share the fate of those which they were constructed to replace.

The outer forts on the Portsdown Hills have, I believe, already been declared obsolete. Those responsible for their construction seem to have been unable to divest themselves of the idea which animated mediæval builders of fortified towns. Only that side of the forts which faces inland is constructed for offence or defence, there being no place for guns on the inside (constructed merely of brickwork) facing the town.

Built for the purpose of repelling an enemy attacking Portsmouth from the land side, in these days of long distance fire they could easily be demolished by cannon on ships at sea. As a matter of fact they must always have been useless, for if ever an invading force had obtained such a footing inland as to attack Portsmouth, these Portsdown forts would in all probability have been powerless to save the town from capture.

My visits to the seaside having, it was said, strengthened me, after endless confabulations between my mother and governess with our doctor, who was seldom long out of the house, it was decided to risk sending me to school, and accordingly after my father had given me a new five-shilling piece I was taken off to Bournemouth and handed over to the charge of a master whose wife received elaborate instructions as to the extreme care with which I was to be treated. In all probability she was well used to parents who thought their sons unusually delicate.

Anyhow, I was not treated differently from any of the other boys and no ill-results ensued.

The private schools of the "seventies" were not the luxurious establishments which parents seem to require to-day.

"Ravenswood," for instance was very simply furnished, while the food was of a very plain, if nourishing, description. The main principle of the catering system was undoubtedly to satisfy a boy's appetite at a minimum of expense, and it was therefore not surprising that cold bacon figured at so many of the meals. As, however, it was generally good, its constant appearance on the table aroused little, if any, irritation. In addition to this, we were always being told to eat as much bread as possible, with the result that not a few of my schoolfellows formed a habit of inordinate bread eating which followed them into after life.

Ailments were treated in an old-fashioned but not entirely ineffectual way. Any boy who had a cold was made to wear his cap indoors as well as out. It was unlikely that this had any real effect, but somehow our colds did not seem to last long.

The headmaster, who was also the proprietor of the school, though an excellent man, was by no means a profound scholar—still what he did know he knew thoroughly and was not unsuccessful in imparting his knowledge to those under his charge. A fine penman himself, he tried hard to get his boys to improve their handwriting. He was no great Greek scholar and taught that language merely in an elementary way; he was, however, well able to deal with Latin, and his pupils soon acquired a very fair knowledge of the tongue in question.

An excellent little library was at the disposal of those who, like myself, were fond of reading; Gilbert A'Beckett's comic histories of England and Rome (now scarce) were the most popular books.

Geography, history and arithmetic were taught in quite a satisfactory fashion. Discipline was good, idleness or wilful failure being punished by a few sharp cuts on the palm of the open hand. An exception to this, however, was made in the case of a Scotch boy who wore a kilt. Owing, I suppose, to an idea that good opportunities must never be neglected, the lad in question was always caned upon the spacious part of his person which nature seemed to have indicated for such a purpose.

Our master had never been at either Oxford or Cambridge and possessed no degree of any kind whatever. He had in all probability drifted into keeping a school after having tried one or two other professions. Nevertheless I think he did better as a teacher of small boys than many more intellectual or highly educated men. More human than the run of professional pedagogues, he possessed a good deal of sound wordly knowledge, would stand no nonsense, and made his authority felt without trouble.

Notwithstanding such qualifications, I fear he did not find his school a very paying concern, and eventually, indeed, he had to give it up. Owing, however, to the kindness of an old pupil, he and his wife were given a cottage in Scotland, where they passed their declining years in comfort and ease, which they both deserved to do, having done their duty in the world a good deal better than many more erudite and more pretentious people.

While at school at Bournemouth, I was frequently taken to bathe in the sea and was by way of being taught to swim, but owing to the methods employed I made no progress whatever. Thrown into deeper water than was pleasant and more often than not knocked over by the waves, I lost all confidence as to ever being able to cope with them. So much did this affect me that even after I had gone to Eton I was never able to attempt, much less pass, the swimming test which every boy desirous of boating has to undergo.

Some years later, however, when in a public swimming bath, I suddenly swam its whole length, which was no inconsiderable distance. Henceforth I swam with perfect facility, having frequently been upset out of boats on the Thames and elsewhere and got to shore with complete ease. The secret of swimming is nothing but confidence; once that is obtained, natation is the easiest thing in the world.

Bournemouth was of course then very much smaller than it is in these days, and the pine woods, which were one of the chief attractions of the place, were to a great extent devoid of the villas which have since been built. A stream trickled down Boscombe Chine and formed the delight of numerous youngsters, who spent happy hours damming up its waters with miniature embankments of earth and mud. The rivulet in question has

now disappeared, either diverted into a drain or flowing in darkness beneath the asphalt surface, dear to those responsible for English seaside resorts.

At Boscombe lived Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who was my mother's cousin, and I was often asked over to his charming house with grounds sloping down to the sea, both he and Lady Wolff being very good-natured and kind to young people.

Sir Henry, when one of Lord Malmesbury's secretaries at Heron Court, had been one of the first to recognize the advantages of Bournemouth from a residential point of view, with the result that he had bought land at Boscombe when the locality was totally undeveloped. He ought, indeed, to have made a great deal of money. In matters of business, however, he was seldom lucky, and before his land was ripe for building it had to be sold.

During the summer term my schoolfellows and I used to be taken for a trip to the New Forest—then, as now, a happy hunting-ground for those fond of entomology. Out would come the butterfly nets and away we would go in search of the rare Fritillaries which I never knew anyone to catch. Butterfly hunting in England is an unsatisfactory form of amusement. To begin with, the number of British species is comparatively small, while rarities seldom or ever seem to come in the way of the amateur collector. I do not think I ever met one of the latter who had himself captured a Purple Emperor or Hairstreak, or even an ordinary Swallow Tail. There is little pleasure in getting a long series of Red Admirals, Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells or Painted Ladies, beautiful as they all are when on the wing.

One famous year I did succeed in getting an interesting series of Clouded Yellows, but that was merely because for some unexplained reason they were extraordinarily abundant that season. I do not believe I have ever seen one since! Years later, in Persia, though I had given up collecting, I kept my eyes open for strange butterflies. And what did I see? As a rule nothing but the varieties common in England. In a certain district of Mazanderan, however, I did come across a large number of a species of what seemed to me to be more or less identical with our own rather uncommon White Admiral.

In the mountains of Savoy I have seen a far greater variety of butterflies than ever met my gaze in Asia !

I saw some Swallow Tails while in Japan, but on the whole I believe that the scientific expert alone is able to find those scarce species which figure in finely illustrated books dealing with Lepidoptera.

Considering the vast amount of excellent public collections, where every species is properly displayed, amateur butterfly collecting in England, at any rate, seems hardly worth while. What is the use of a case full of tattered, badly set specimens which anyone can easily obtain ? Far better to let the beautiful insects live out their little lives in peace and watch their graceful love-making as they wing their way across the garden paths, radiant as the flowers on which they love to alight.

I hate humanitarian cranks with their noxious humbug as to the cruelty of sport, which they would suppress by legislation ; nevertheless I think that a real lover of nature should hesitate before becoming a butterfly collector. Harmless, beautiful, and, as the ancients understood, symbolical of much which is well worth thinking about, a live butterfly is a source of exhilaration and joy, whereas a dead one is but a poor little shrunken and pathetic reminder of that mysterious force which some day or other drags every living thing into the mysterious oblivion which man calls death.

So much for entomology, which I may add was by no means our sole object during our visits to the Conqueror's Forest.

The drive through the woods indeed was a delight in itself, besides which there was always a glorious lunch, highly appreciated by boys who on ordinary days were by no means sumptuously fed. Though at home I lived much in the country, these expeditions to the New Forest always gave me the feeling which I am told animates poor children taken for a day in the green fields by some Fresh Air Fund.

In an ordinary way we amused ourselves by playing games—in the summer, cricket, and in the winter, football, at which, though by no means a dashing or even a passable player, I contrived to break my arm. This, however, had its compensations, for in addition to being excused a good deal of work, I was sent all sorts of dainties which my delicate state was supposed

to require. Also I learnt to write with my left hand, not too well, however, which perhaps was not unwise from the point of view of being allowed to remain more or less idle.

After my father's death, in 1878, our place in Hampshire was sold, and my mother acquired a smaller house near Heathfield, in Sussex. The villagers in this part of the county were a queer, independent kind of folk, a number of whom did very well out of chickens, the fattening of which was a local industry of a flourishing kind.

There were a great many Nonconformists and also not a few Mormons, the district round Heathfield being at that time one of the principal recruiting grounds for missionaries from Utah. Every now and then some family which had been induced to go to Salt Lake City would send back a piteous account of their life out there, together with an appeal for help to return to Sussex. Local feeling would be aroused, and Mormon missionaries ducked in horse ponds and chased out of villages. After a time, however, the latter recommenced their propaganda as before, and I should not be surprised if it were going on still.

East Sussex was then singularly primitive in its ways; old iron work was to be found in many cottages, while there was good fishing in the hammer ponds, near which England's cannon had once been made.

The country round Heathfield is intersected by streams which go to form the Cuckmere River, and though, owing to overhanging trees and bushes, fly fishing was impossible, we got a good many trout by lading out holes after the water had been dammed above them. I have read and heard a good deal about tickling trout in Sussex streams, but I never remember an instance of any which were actually caught that way. Lading, on the other hand, generally yielded some result. This method, once popular with Sussex poachers, could not be called a high form of sport, but in a number of cases it was the only way of getting the fish at all, a rod and line being impossible to use in most places. I did, however, have some good sport in that way fishing for perch in a lovely old hammer pond which we rented near Heathfield.

Many a delightful afternoon did I pass in a punt with the late Mr. Henry Nottidge Moseley, who came to stay with us during



the summer months. After having been naturalist to the Challenger Expedition, he had settled down at Oxford as Linacre Professor of Human and Comparative Anatomy. A brilliantly clever man with an illuminating and comprehensive outlook upon the universe, to listen to him was a privilege which I greatly enjoyed. From him I imbibed a number of ideas which have been a solace to me throughout my life, together with a love of tolerance and a hatred for cant and humbug which grows fiercer as the years roll on.

Mr. Moseley, to the great sorrow of his friends, died before he had reached fifty. My mother, who had the greatest admiration for him, never ceased to lament his early death.

Another pleasant visitor of ours was Mr. Frederick Locker, the writer of so much delightful verse, who used to come over to us from Rowfant.

Though motors were yet undreamt of, we went about a good deal in the neighbourhood, to Lord De La Warr's, at Buckhurst, and to my cousin's at Eridge.

There was some rough shooting attached to our house, and having been given a gun I amused myself well enough. In the first place I practised on small birds, as my mother wrote to a friend: "Aiming at everything, hitting nothing;" the birds, indeed, suffered little, which I am glad of now.

The main point about the shooting was that it gave one a good walk over lovely country; partridges were not abundant, but the people with whom I shot were content with very small bags. Three guns, after walking the whole day, would consider ten brace a good reward for their efforts. Nevertheless, this was perhaps a higher form of sport than killing hundreds of birds driven by an army of beaters.

In addition to shooting, I used occasionally to go out on a pony and follow some harriers which hunted round Hailsham. Altogether my holidays were full of enjoyment, though I had no companions of my own age.

In the summer, being much interested in architecture, I visited all the Sussex churches I could. It was the golden age of the restorer, who was hard at work obliterating vestiges of a past which he did not understand. Scarcely a village had escaped his devastating activities. For some reason or other, people

seemed always ready to loosen their purse-strings where any question of restoration was concerned. And very disastrous was the result—the noble serenity and soaring hope which animated mediæval builders being unknown to their successors of a more material age.

Keenly desirous of checking a veritable riot of vandalism, I determined to appeal to the press with regard to one or two churches which were threatened by the restorer's hand. Thinking to give two letters I sent to the London papers a better chance of being put in, I signed one "Octogenarian" and the other "Father of Twelve." Either they were badly written or the editors smelt a rat, for neither appeared. Finally, however, an epistle signed *Amator Temporis Acti* was, to my great delight, printed by *The Globe*. The correspondence which followed had, I think, satisfactory results.

About this time I went to see Rye. The fine church was being restored, but we were assured that beyond removing the high pews and carrying out some necessary repairs, nothing would be done. I have not been there since, so am unaware whether the church has shared the fate of so many Sussex churches, which have practically lost all interest owing to the restorer.

In the district round us there were only two churches which might be called quite unspoilt. These were at Warbleton and Waldron. Both had been kept in good repair, but neither had the curious machine-made look, which is one of the disastrous consequences of a drastic renovation. Since those days, however, the old woodwork has been taken out of one at least of these churches and new seating installed as a memorial to a former rector. This method of commemorating the dead is responsible for a good deal of vandalism in modern England.

The substitution of machine-made and ornate seating for the simple handiwork of craftsmen of another age can only be a subject for regret.

Considering my boyish fondness for old buildings, it is curious that I never thought of trying to become an architect when I grew up—the more so as my mother was constantly urging me to choose a profession.

"You can't be idle, you know," she would say, "people who do nothing in life are always wretched."

I felt that she was quite right to say this, nevertheless a number of her friends who came to Charles Street, though they had nothing to do but amuse themselves, were obviously happy, as it seemed to me I should be if I could follow their example. Not that I was particularly lazy by nature. Had I felt that I could achieve real success in any particular calling hard work would have had no terrors for me.

As far, however, as I could gauge my own capacities, I had just enough intelligence not to succeed. If, therefore, there was no real necessity for me to work, I thought the life of an observer of the various phases of humanity would suit me best.

My mother had always told me that it was absolutely essential that I should earn my own living, but after my father's death she had said so in such a light-hearted way that I began to think the utterance merely another of the pious frauds which are invented to benefit young people. As, however, I did not wish to become a mere impecunious loafer, I set about making serious enquiries as to what my position really was to be.

Discussing the question of a profession, I said something about going into the Army. The suggestion was none too badly received.

"The Guards would be nice," said my sister, who admired the uniform.

"But a horrid life lounging about London," rejoined my mother. "Of course some of the officers are very nice young men, but as a rule they are all apt to spend money and get into trouble."

"I suppose," I said, "there would be no chance of my being able to afford it?"

She replied that if I really felt that I wanted to become a Guardsman she thought it might be managed, which reply showed me that I was not to be so badly off after all.

At that time an officer in the Guards, as I knew very well, had to lead a more or less expensive life; it was not a poor man's regiment at all.

Confident that I was going to be fairly comfortable as far as finance was concerned, I adjourned the discussion, saying that I

would think matters over. This pleased everybody and did not commit me to anything definite. As a matter of fact a military career would not have suited me at all, though it would have suited me better than becoming a clergyman, which terrifying idea had once been started by a cousin of ours who had one or two rich livings to give away. Nor did the prospect of a business career attract me. As far as I could see a successful business man was generally an individual who passed his time buying things for less than they were worth and selling them for more. This was certainly not in my line. I would as soon have become a bookmaker, which seemed to be a more amusing mode of getting the best of one's fellow creatures.

The only profession I had ever seriously thought of adopting was one likely to yield little profit. Being as a child very fond of science, the idea of becoming a professor had rather attracted me, but as I grew older any desire for that kind of thing faded utterly away. In any case I should have made a very indifferent one. As a lecturer I should probably have bored myself and everyone else and led a thoroughly dull as well as useless life.

During my boyhood I saw a number of Victorian celebrities at my mother's house in Charles Street, Berkeley Square. Well do I recall the tall gaunt figure of Maria Marchioness of Ailesbury, who spoke in a deep bass voice. The old Duke of Wellington, the "son of Waterloo," as people called him, was a frequent visitor. He was always particularly kind to me and, as an Eton boy, I generally used to spend part of my holidays at Strathfieldsaye, a delightful old-fashioned house, full of pictures of the Great Duke and his battles; some of the happiest hours of my boyhood were passed there. The old Duke, who had been at Eton under Keate, beneath a somewhat brusque manner concealed a heart of gold, and he was full of humour too.

As an Eton boy Lord Douro, dressed in an exact copy of the doctor's robes and hat, had actually painted the headmaster's door red one night, to the amazement of a few persons who saw him.

In some verse commemorating this feat the watchmen were supposed to be summoned before a conclave of masters the next morning to describe what they had seen;

"We both last night  
Saw him—the Doctor—in his own cocked-hat,  
His bands, his breeches, and his bombazine,  
Paint his own door-post red." Then great the wrath,  
And great the marvel of that conclave; all  
Turned their cold eyes on him, their dreaded chief,  
Convicted on such damning evidence  
Of this irreverent deed.

Keate never discovered the culprit till years after when, as a Canon of Windsor, he was entertaining Lord Douro at dinner. The latter, speaking of Eton days, alluded to the door-painting incident, and was about to make a full confession when the doctor became so red in the face that he thought it wiser to desist.

A welcome guest at Strathfieldsaye was Mr. Arnold, a merry old soul who owned the Lyceum Theatre and had been a member of the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, the history of which he had written.

Lady Chesterfield and other great ladies of the old school were constant visitors but the Duke liked young people too, as well as celebrities in the literary, artistic or theatrical worlds. Sir Henry Irving, Mr. T. H. Escott and other clever men often gathered round his hospitable board. The Reverend Mr. Gleig, who as an officer of the 52nd Foot had carried the regimental colours at Waterloo, was a very old friend. After dinner the gentlemen, though they drank little, sat long over their wine telling stories of days which, to me, were already ancient history. I liked listening to these old men, however, who now and then told me many curious and interesting things.

At my mother's house I saw most of the prominent politicians of that day, among them Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke)—a strange-looking man, who was supposed to be unorthodox in his religious views. Disraeli came there too. I well remember my mother telling me as a child to say "How-do-you-do" to him. Dressed in a shabby old paletot, he sat looking at me as if I were some strange little animal, but with no unkindly expression on his inscrutable old face he shook me by the hand.

Later on I began to see three lights of the "Fourth Party," at Sunday lunches—Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, with his whim-

sical quips and stories ; Lord Randolph Churchill, full of vivacity and life, laughing over some "draw" which was being hatched for the Grand Old Man ; and Sir John Gorst, with his polished delivery and flute-like voice.

They always seemed discontented with Sir Stafford Northcote, (afterwards Lord Iddesleigh), whose methods were much too mild for such a triumvirate. Lord Randolph was particularly sarcastic and irreverently nicknamed this high principled, if steady-going, politician "The Goat."

My mother, who liked Sir Stafford, always used to protest against this, but her remonstrances could do little to curb either Lord Randolph or Sir Henry, who were difficult to restrain.

As time went on I observed that Mr. Chamberlain, who had been denounced as a Republican, was gradually coming into favour in Tory circles, and one day he too made his appearance at lunch. After this he was a pretty constant visitor.

In the "seventies" and "eighties" the proceedings in Parliament, I think, attracted greater attention than is now the case ; the speeches of men like Bright, Gladstone and Disraeli being read with an interest such as the utterances of our modern politicians do not command.

War with Russia was at that time always more or less of a possibility ; indeed, many thinking such a struggle inevitable declared that the sooner it was over and done with the better.

Foreign politics were of course not nearly so complicated as they are to-day, a fact which severe critics of those at present in power fail to take into account.

Also men like Gladstone and Disraeli, enjoying as they did enormous prestige, were more trusted in their dealings with foreign nations than are their successors of to-day. When Lord Beaconsfield, with Lord Salisbury, returned from the Congress of Berlin, no one knew exactly what had been done till Dizzy himself announced that he had brought back "Peace with honour."

In those days a speech by a prominent politician attracted enormous attention, which is not the case now. Oratory has undoubtedly deteriorated, while many of our modern speakers have a hesitating way which prevents their words from making any profound impression.

While a speaker of undoubted ability was making a halting speech in the House of Lords, his father-in-law, a peer with an incisive tongue, told a friend who had asked him when a certain happy event might be expected, "If my daughter's delivery is as slow as that of my son-in-law it will probably not occur for several months."

In addition to politicians, my mother entertained a number of guests prominent in the world of literature and art. One of the nicest of these, it seemed to me, was Matthew Arnold, full of the delights of the Surrey garden which he loved so well.

Bernal Osborne, whose daughter was my mother's intimate friend, was a frequent visitor, as was the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Alexander Cockburn. The main thing I remember about the men of their generation was that their voices were pitched in a louder key than that of the men about town of to-day. Also they cut their words more sharply, not running them one into the other as so many people do now. "The moderns," my mother used to say, "mumble and jumble to such an extent that they are often difficult to understand."

Though their political ascendancy was a thing of the past, the Upper Classes of that day still enjoyed considerable social prestige and indirectly wielded a certain amount of power.

About many of the older men there was a natural dignity which commanded respect, but though sensible enough, they were firmly wedded to certain old-fashioned principles—prejudices, Radicals called them. Direct of speech, they hated humbug and equivocation. Though often limited in their outlook, politicians drawn from this class were far more esteemed abroad than are their successors of to-day.

Writing at the time when a misunderstanding seemed likely to threaten the existence of the *entente*, a well-known French journalist, after hinting that the modern English politician seemed to have acquired most of the devious ways of the baser kind of French deputy, recently said:

"Oh, for an Englishman of the old school—a bulldog with limited ideas, a formidable row of teeth and a good deal of sound common sense."

In some ways the aristocrats of a past age were quite simple and unsophisticated. Unworldliness, curious as it may seem, is

quite compatible with wide worldly knowledge, and though possessing a sound knowledge of human nature most of them understood little about secret commissions or the intricacies connected with dealing in stocks and shares.

Highly appreciative of the maxim which says that a little in one's own pocket is better than much in another man's purse, few of them attempted to increase their income by speculation. On the other hand the *ignis fatuus* of the Turf lured not a few to ruin. Many a fine fortune has changed hands on Newmarket Heath.

They were not hypocritical or even apologetic about their pleasures, and would as cheerfully avow their devotion to the gaming table as to the fair sex.

"By birth," said one, "I am a Protestant; by conviction, an agnostic; by practice, a voluptuary."

No cant about this!

The old school were not ashamed of what they said, and did not care twopence who heard them. They did not think it bad form to talk loud; such an idea only arose when Society became mixed. In the present age, when Society is so largely composed of folks of uncertain position, few dare to be themselves, while the majority are greatly swayed by fear of what others may think.

A past generation was too independent to worry about this; its members occupied a social position of an unassailable kind which any personal idiosyncrasy was very unlikely to shatter. A striking instance of this was the late Lord Clanrikarde, great uncle of Lord Lascelles, whom the Marquis made his heir. The latter, it may be added, wrote his title "Clanrikarde," because, as he said, eleven of his predecessors in the earldom had done so.

He was on very friendly terms with my mother, besides which, in later years, I saw a good deal of him at my club. There, as elsewhere, he practised the most rigid economy, taking trouble to spend as little as he could upon his meals. He was fond of skating and at one time frequented Niagara, where he would make little circles upon the ice.

He would bring a pair of boots with skates attached, and a practical joker once filled the toes of the other ones with buns, the result being a terrible explosion when the Marquis left the ice and tried to resume his ordinary footgear. Though generally



wearing a jewel of great value in his neck-tie, his clothes and hat were deplorable. He would, however, occasionally give quite large sums for Sevres china, pictures, or *objets d'art*. Well known as an art connoisseur, his judgment was highly respected.

One of the Marquis's peculiarities was that if he perceived anyone he knew trying to come up and speak to him in the street he would walk quickly on, and if pursued break into something like a trot. On such occasions he generally made for Christie's, where he was fond of "going to ground."

Lord Clanrikarde hated crowds, and on the occasion of a Royal procession or other public function would go and spend the day at Hampstead Heath, taking his lunch in his pocket.

Of an entirely different disposition had been Lord Clanrikarde's elder brother, Lord Dunkellin, an officer in the Foot Guards, who had fought in the Crimea and been taken prisoner by the Russians. My mother spoke of him as one of the most pleasant men she had ever met. Anything but a recluse, he possessed a kindly nature which made him universally popular with all classes, especially in Ireland, where the memory of his genial personality long endured. So much was this the case that a statue was erected to him in Galway, which he once represented in Parliament. Owing to a spirit of senseless destruction the effigy in question was recently torn from its pedestal and destroyed, an act of stupid vandalism which can but increase the respect in which Lord Dunkellin's memory is still held. Having in the "fifties" of the last century gone out to India, where he occupied an official position, he used to write frequently to Sir William Gregory, with whom he was on intimate terms.

The letters deal with various subjects and, the writer having had a vivacious and facile pen, contain much which is of interest even at the present day.

Referring to the Mutiny on October 22, 1857, Lord Dunkellin said: "We are getting there, but only steadily, and are still in trouble about Lucknow. Outram and Havelock certainly forced their way through the town and rescued the garrison of the Residency from the imminent danger with which they were threatened. But the Residency is in the town, and the rebels in great force have closed round them and again besieged them. Our fellows are consequently cut off from their supplies and

obliged to wait till reinforcements shall come and set them free. The number of the sick, wounded, and women and children is such as to preclude all attempts of cutting their way through, which might be done without encumbrances. Certainly the women, poor things, have been a sad clog on all the men at the different stations. I have always said a soldier should never marry, and I still adhere to the opinion. You need not make it public though, for fear of reducing a couple of dozen or so of 'fayre damosels' to inextinguishable grief.

"It would take too long to give you all my views on the *possible* and *probable* causes of the outbreak. The *real* cause no one knows, as yet, for certain. The only sure thing is that Dizzy *has not* gone near it. The conspiracy is military altogether, and Mohammedan in its origin. I am inclined to think that the treachery and bigotry of the circumcized, seeing how weak we were in European troops, and being accustomed to hear themselves praised and lauded up to the skies as the finest soldiers in the world, 'My beautiful Sepoys!' etc., etc., and having by degrees got over the fear and reverence with which they at first regarded the white faces who conquered them at such disproportionate odds, roused up in the breasts of the ambitious agents of Delhi or Lucknow, or both, the desire to reinstate the old Mogul Empire. They were fortified by various prophecies known and received in India fixing a date to the end of our rule, and, encouraged by the unfair pretext assigned for the annexation of Oude by Lord D.\* and by the blundering way in which that was carried out, they soon got hold of the idle blackguards of their own faith, and then had to find some means of working on the Hindoos so as to force them to join.

"Little by little this was accomplished, and the report of greased cartridges was very ably handled by them and so used as to clinch the matter. Then the flame that had been smouldering burst forth into a blaze, and here we are! Very nearly, where are we? There are a quantity of matters of petty detail connected with the military and regimental system worked in with these causes, but it is too long an affair to write about. It was a devilish well-got-up thing and very nearly successful.

\* Lord Dalhousie.

"Lay the blame where you like, but take my word for it, throughout the whole business Lord Canning came out really well, and whatever success has attended the measures is fairly attributable to him. Of course he will be abused, but I think not by anybody who really understands the position he was in. You know I am not so prejudiced by family relationship as to think whatever any near connection does must be perfect (*teste Shalote*), so you may receive my opinion as unbiased."

Lord Dunkellin seems to have thought little of Anglo-Indian Society. In another letter to Sir William he said: "India is no doubt a fine country to see and to travel through, but I would never advise a man who can hire a crossing at home to come and settle here—in Calcutta I mean, as one sees and learns no more of India than if one was at Loughrea. There are no amusements, the Society is bad and stupid, and fresh air rarely attainable. One is obliged to stay indoors nearly all day till about six p.m., and then there is a coolish hour when one rides or drives. Like all petty towns, the Society, women especially, is divided into different sets who do not recognize each other, and as the people rarely take interest in European affairs and despise India, never write and seldom read, their sole occupation is picking holes in their neighbours' garments. However, I shall be clear of it for some short time, as I am going on a special mission to Bombay directly, and very possibly on to the Persian Gulf, Bushire, and up the river to Bagdad to see Murray, who is, I believe, sojourning there. It will be a charming trip and very interesting, and I suppose will occupy about three months."

Lord Dunkellin, who for years had been a martyr to gout, died in 1867, at which period the aristocracy still enjoyed a good deal of political and social power. Its existence as a dominant class, though the fact was not generally realized, really ceased in the "eighties" of the last century. At that time the vast majority of old privileges had vanished, though the semblance of a few remained.

## CHAPTER II



## CHAPTER II

Eton in the "seventies."—Unruly boys.—"Change here for Staines, Windsor and Datchet!"—The Eton Mission.—The educational system and its results.—Associations and charm of the school.—Time-honoured customs.—Fellows and Masters.—The Lower Master and his methods—Dr. Hornby.—Dr. Goodford's humour.—An apocryphal flogging.—Claustrophobia.—How we learnt French.—The Tarver family.—Ragging the Press.—A colossal hoax.—"Slunching the Paddocks."—Our house paper.—Boys who have become celebrities.—An Etonian helps to save the Queen Victoria.—Her interest in the school.—Lord Roberts.—Army class.—Modern Eton and the new rich.—Old and new buildings.—My first visit to Paris.—Relics of the Commune.—The table d'hôte.—A young American gentleman.

**I**N the early part of 1879 I went to Eton. About the first thing I did on arrival there, after having been shown my room, was to go out and buy the usual mantelboard and some sporting pictures. My first evening two biggish boys came into my room, asked me a few questions, and having favourably commented on a brilliantly coloured print of the Grand National Steeplechase, which they said indicated "the right sort of taste," strolled out again.

There was no trying ordeal for new arrivals, who were merely asked a few questions, and in a very short time I was on good terms with the boys of my own age. In due course I went to Upper School to undergo the examination which then merely determined one's place in the school, for in those days failure to pass was impossible. Good papers placed a boy in Remove; very bad ones in Third Form; moderate ones somewhere between the two. I took Upper Middle Fourth, which, considering that I knew scarcely any Greek, was not so bad.

Shortly afterwards I found myself fully inducted into the Eton curriculum—early school and other schools, a half-holiday three days a week, daily short morning chapel and two interminable services on Sundays. At that time, except for a loaf of

bread, some butter and tea, a boy had to buy food for his breakfast and tea. Lunch was the only substantial meal provided by the housemaster, except a very indifferent supper to which not many went, with the result that if a boy ran out of money or had no hampers from home he went about pretty hungry. I, like a great many other boys, had an "order" at a "sock shop" which entitled me to draw a certain amount of provisions every day. It was not a very large order, and consequently I usually lived like a fighting cock during the beginning of every half, while spending the rest of it with a very acute and insufficiently satisfied appetite, but I do not think that any harm to my health ensued.

On Sundays at lunch we were each given a glass of port or sherry. Some of the boys, among whom I was one, did not care for either. Nevertheless we never refused it, there being a carefully thought out system by which those who did not want alcohol passed it on to those who did—thus some boys got three or four glasses, or even more.

The house I was in was not particularly studious or particularly orderly. Our tutor, who was also our housemaster, an excellent and very clever man, had a hard task to keep in check certain unruly spirits who were experts in anarchy. While there was no bullying, small boys were sometimes commanded to assist in literally pulling our tutor's leg.

Shortly after my arrival I was put into one of the large canvas dirty linen bags which lay about the passages, and told to lie still at the top of a staircase till someone kicked me, when I was to rise up and catch my aggressor by the leg, holding on to it as long as I could. Before long I heard a number of iron coal-scuttles being piled up on the stairs beneath me. A tremendous row was then made in the passage near where I lay, with the result that the angry voice of my tutor was soon heard in the distance below.

As he came up the stairs someone gave the coal-scuttles a kick, with the result that they fairly overwhelmed the ascending pedagogue. When at last he reached the top and found the linen bag lying in his way he tried to kick it aside. Upon this the bag rose up according to plan and clutched him firmly by the leg, to the delight of a crowd of boys who looked on, roaring

with laughter. Having at last been made to get out of the bag, I found myself confronted by my irate tutor.

"What on earth do you mean by this?" he enquired.

"Please sir, someone tied me up in the bag and I was only trying to get out, sir."

The long and short of it was that the poor man, after making an effort to discover who had organized the joke, retreated, threatening the most terrible punishments should anything of the sort occur again. He was, as a matter of fact, too good-natured to deal with such a collection of mischievous young devils.

Another popular joke which everyone, except the victim, thoroughly enjoyed was what we called the "railway game." This could be played about twice a half—more was dangerous. The boys' rooms opened into long passages with a staircase to the tutorial quarters at one end. By arrangement, each occupant of a passage (having first of all laid out some work on his bureau) would stand at the open door of his room. Someone would then shout out: "Slough, change here for Staines, Windsor, Datchet," and blow a shrill piercing blast upon a railway whistle, after which all the doors, one after the other, would be closed with a slam exactly simulating the noise made when a train is about to start.

One or two applications of this treatment never failed to bring our tutor upstairs in a great rage, when he would find every boy quietly working at his desk.

"Did you shut your door just now?"

"I may have done so, sir," would be the reply given with an air of injured innocence.

Sometimes boys had heard no banging of doors at all. "I was too busy working to notice anything, sir," and so on and so on, ending with the retreat of our tutor vowing that if such a disturbance occurred again everyone in the passage would be made to write out a "Georgic."

An earnest, serious and hardworking man, he was by nature ill equipped to deal with insubordinate boys. His way of occasionally setting impossible punishments, the severity of which had eventually to be mitigated, also impaired his prestige in repressing disorder,



Deeply religious himself, he could not, it seemed, understand the somewhat cynical attitude which a number of the boys under his charge adopted towards him. While not at all vicious, most of the boys regarded religion as being mainly a matter of going to church. Such as were avowedly pious were looked upon with a suspicion which in certain cases was thoroughly justified. At the same time any open attack upon religion would have been severely repressed as being bad form. Like playing games, not telling a lie (except under certain conditions), keeping oneself neat and tidy, and one or two other things, it was one of those social fetishes to which every one was expected to accord a certain amount of respect.

I remember the starting of the Eton Mission, which, when announced to us one evening by our tutor, aroused but scant enthusiasm. We little appreciated any inroad upon our not over-abundant stock of pocket money, besides which there seemed to be something Radical—even revolutionary—about muddling up the East and West Ends. In some other houses where a more serious tone prevailed the idea was, I believe, better received.

As regards education, while the masters were clever and the facilities good, the majority of boys in my opinion learnt little likely to be of use in after life. Eton at that time still largely adhered to the old system of putting classical learning first. No attempt was made to encourage a boy in any particular line of study or research for which he seemed to have a liking or aptitude. Provided he could just scrape through his lessons, nothing very much was said. On the other hand, anyone who showed an unusual liking for work found plenty of opportunities for study at hand, while the boys left him undisturbed.

Much of the regular school work, however, was less useful than solving acrostics would have been. No wonder that a large number of my contemporaries regarded certain tasks merely as things to be got through and forgotten as perfectly useless once they had been done. Anything, for instance, more idiotic than the Sunday questions which saddened one's Sabbath day it is impossible to conceive!

The general results of the system in the case of a boy of moderate abilities, who had arrived at the conclusion that no

good was to be got by exerting himself, may be gathered from the writer's own experience. He went to Eton knowing practically no Greek, a little Latin, some arithmetic, and no algebra. He left when in the Fifth Division of the school; that is to say, about one hundred and twenty out of nine hundred and fifty from the top, knowing rather less of these things than when he had come. Nevertheless he had never failed in the various examinations he had had to pass. A smattering of superficial knowledge and an intimate acquaintance with the best way of doing papers carried him triumphantly through all ordeals.

On the other hand, after I had got into the Fifth Form and was allowed access to the school library I read an enormous amount of books with great profit to my mental training. That was a real education as compared with the absurd curriculum which had to be followed in order not to get into serious trouble with the authorities. No attempt was made to teach us English literature, modern geography, or history. Very few boys knew how to write a good letter, though all could turn out some wretched imitation of what was dignified by the name of Latin verse!

The above criticisms may seem as if the writer formed a low opinion of the benefits to be gathered at his old school. But such is not the case. Notwithstanding the farcical nature of much of the teaching and the general apathy as to learning, there were a number of good things connected with an Eton education—not things which were taught, but ways of thought and ideas—of great value and use in after life. There is no doubt but that the curious charm of the place influences a boy's mind, while the beauty of the old walls and towers exercises a fascination over all who have any artistic perception. This, I think, is in a great measure the secret cause of that love of Eton which in some degree permeates almost everyone who has been at school there.

Perhaps the benefit of an Eton education was best summed up by Dr. Hornby. An old Etonian having been heard to say that he really did not know what good an Eton education had done him, the headmaster remarked: "Of course he does not know; that is the beauty of it."

Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the school, there is no doubt but that those educated at it are imbued with a profound conviction of its superiority over other places of education.

"Why," said a Harrow boy to an Etonian, "do they always say Eton and Harrow and never Harrow and Eton?"

"Well, after all, they always say Gentlemen and Players," was the reply.

Though great changes had been made about 1870 (when Lower School, with its ancient and quaintly named divisions of Sense and Nonsense, Upper Greek and Lower Greek, had somewhat needlessly been abolished) there still remained much to remind one of the good old days. The very memory of Montem, that ancient Eton festival which Dr. Hawtreys succeeded in getting suppressed in the "forties," it is true had utterly disappeared, while the joys of Election Saturday, which had only been done away with a few years before my arrival, were also forgotten.

The Fourth of June, however, in my day was a gala day for the town as well as the school, with its procession of boats and fireworks just off Windsor Bridge, while the bells of the Castle rang out a peal which still lingers in some of our ears. The main feature of the proceedings for minor members of the school was the abundance of good things to eat and the pretty copious supply of alcoholic drinks which all who wanted it were generally able to obtain. Few of us realized that all the fuss originated from the day having been the birthday of good old George III—that not ill-natured monarch, in mourning for whom Etonians abandoned their blue coats in favour of the black ones which they yet wear.

In the late "seventies" and early "eighties" there still survived Fellows and masters who remembered the old unreformed Eton and the many queer usages which were a part of it. The Venerable Archdeacon Balston, a Fellow who had been headmaster for a short time but had resigned rather than consent to reforms, was justly esteemed as a thorough-going old Tory. The Vice-Provost was the Reverend George John Dupuis, while the Provost was Doctor Goodford, D.D., who had passed his whole life at Eton and still preached lengthy sermons in the

College Chapel. Other Fellows were the Reverend Edward Coleridge and the Reverend John Wilder. The latter had given large sums towards the so-called restoration of the Chapel and College Hall, both of which buildings during the middle of the last century had been drastically restored by a somewhat presumptuous architect, whose designs would have considerably astonished the original builders.

Veteran masters were the Reverend Edward Hale, the Reverend Francis St. John Thackeray and the Reverend Charles Caldecott James, while Swinburne's old tutor, the Reverend James Leigh Joynes, the kindly and efficient "Lower Master" who could be stern enough on occasion, had been Captain of "Montem" in the "forties." Mr. Joynes had a way of suiting the severity of his floggings according to the offence which they were intended to correct. On one occasion I remember him laying with a will into a boy who is now a distinguished officer. The latter, however, although he received some thirty-two strokes, administered with two birches (the first one after a time became useless owing to the force with which it was used), never flinched in the least, though this "real flogging" must have occasioned considerable pain, very different from the mild sensation produced by the usual ones—often little more than a disagreeable form.

The floggings administered by the headmaster, Dr. Hornby—and I speak from personal experiences—were not severe. Nevertheless, being summoned to appear before him was an ordeal which even the most hardened offenders did not like at all.

In appearance Dr. Hornby was the absolutely perfect type of an Eton headmaster. Immaculately dressed and of fine presence, he possessed a natural dignity which even impressed boys totally lacking in reverence for all other institutions of the school. His voice, low and not unpleasant even when delivering a stern admonition, was essentially the voice of an English gentleman of the fine old school. It was a real pleasure to hear him call "Absence," owing to the dignity which he imparted to this tedious duty. Curiously enough this headmaster, who in his latter years at least might have been called the incarnation of the best kind of Eton Conservatism, had on his appointment been regarded as a Radical. Any idea of this kind, however,

had disappeared before my time, and most of us admiringly regarded our head as a Tory of the Tories.

The Provost, Dr. Goodford, when headmaster, in spite of having been the inventor of "Sunday Questions," which caused us so many weary hours, would appear to have taken a genial view of things in general, including flogging. On the morning of one St. Andrew's Day he is said to have swished a Scotch boy who was coming to breakfast with him, and greeted him later on at that meal with a cheery "Here we are again!"

During Dr. Goodford's tenure of the headmastership there was a story that a boy who had refused to be flogged, and who consequently had received no leaving book, found that till he could produce one there was no chance of his obtaining a coveted commission in the Household Cavalry. Returning to Eton in hot haste, he sought Dr. Goodford in order to undergo the required ordeal, only to find the Head departed on a holiday. Following the pedagogue to the Continent and just missing him in Paris and other places, he eventually ran him to ground in the Monastery of Mount St. Bernard, where, in the midst of the assembled monks, Dr. Goodford administered the flogging with an umbrella, which was the only thing handy, afterwards presenting the boy with a Continental "Bradshaw" as a leaving book, by which means everything was put right.

This, in my opinion, not unamusing legend I inserted in my book "Floreat Etona," after the publication of which I received an aggrieved letter from an Eton master who said that the story (which he at some length pointed out could not be true) had given pain to certain relatives of Dr. Goodford. I told him that a version of it had already appeared in Mr. Brinsley Richards's "Seven Years at Eton," at the same time giving him an assurance that it was in no way intended to reflect upon the late Provost. This apparently soothed him down, for I never heard anything more about the story, in which, after all, there was no harm.

The terrible length of the Sunday services in the College Chapel, together with the long and sometimes almost incoherent sermons preached there, eventually got on my nerves to such an extent that more than once I was obliged to go out. As on

these occasions my schoolfellows usually used to trip me up, which produced disorder, my tutor said such exits could not be allowed. As however, it was obvious that they were not made in a spirit of mischief, I was eventually taken to see a medical man, who enquired as to the symptoms of the *malaise* with which I was liable to be assailed. Deciding that I suffered from a mild form of "claustrophobia," he declared that I must no longer be subjected to such ordeals. After this, while I continued to attend the short daily services, I was excused long chapel on Sundays, the hours of which, it was understood, I was to spend in the playing fields with a book, an arrangement which was greatly to my taste.

My last half, however, as I was supposed to have got over the weakness, I was once more made to attend. Though always very uncomfortable when shut in a crowded building for any length of time, I managed to hold out through the services without further trouble, but towards the end of the service I always felt rather queer.

Though the main purpose of an Eton education in those days was to acquire a knowledge of the classics, a few hours every week were devoted to learning Science and French. The science lessons, as far as I remember, were mainly devoted to "pulleys," "momentum," and other things connected with motion. To me it all seemed rather incoherent. As for French, I do not believe that anyone ever learnt that language at Eton—some, however, may have forgotten it there!

The boys were very sceptical as to their French masters' proficiency in the tongue of Molière. The writer of a French grammar, for instance, was said to have once had great difficulties at the *Gare du Nord*, in Paris, owing to the *douaniers* having been quite unable to understand him when he was trying to get his luggage through.

Though of French descent, neither Mr. Frank Tarver (who was a clever amateur caricaturist) nor his brother, Mr. Harry Tarver, looked like Frenchmen; the former, I believe, while piloting some of his English colleagues round Paris was once much disconcerted by the jeers of a Parisian guttersnipe, who playfully called after him, "*Ohé le gros rosbif!*" Both these masters were the sons of a Monsieur Tarver who had come from Dieppe to

become the first French master at Eton. He married an Englishwoman and had fifteen children, one of whom, Mrs. Whiteley, the mother of Mr. George Whiteley, the clever K.C., still survives. Mr. Frank Tarver could be stern enough when he liked, and kept excellent order in school, but this could not be said of his brother, who was occasionally quite unable to control the exuberance of certain divisions which turned his classroom into a pandemonium.

The boys of that day were fond of "ragging" not only their masters but even the London press. Owing to this craze, some extraordinary letters appeared in various papers. The most extraordinary of all was one bearing the signature of an Eton master, which described the writer's remarkable experiences in the country, where he had witnessed a conflict between a cow and a partridge, in which the cow, after a prolonged chase, had eventually captured and devoured the bird. The master eventually wrote an indignant denial, but he was never able to discover who had taken his name in vain.

It was in the "eighties" that a colossal hoax was perpetrated upon the somewhat ingenuous editor of a newly-started London magazine, who had been struck with the idea of increasing its attractions by publishing authentic news of public-school life. Not unnaturally he began with Eton, and, setting to work to secure contributors at that school, obtained some really astounding information, which afterwards went to the making of an extremely scarce little book called "Eton as She is not." Some years ago an amusing account of the whole affair appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* at the end of an excellent article on "College at Eton."

At first the editor was merely furnished with accounts of imaginary local events, but later his correspondents, emboldened by success, sent him details of interesting old school customs, which he printed. The most curious of these, according to the gullible editor's informant, was "Slunching the Paddocks."

"On a certain day," wrote the poor man, "all the collegians and collegers, having been provided with a coarse sort of pudding, go after dinner to Weston's and School Paddocks

and throw their pudding all over them. This is 'Slunching the Paddocks,' the pudding being called 'Slunch.' It is supposed to be derived from the fact that when Queen Elizabeth visited Eton College 'she lunched' (s'lunched) in College Hall, and the students sprinkled the paddocks with dry rice in her honour."

On March 5, 1884, a purely imaginary list of the officials of the various school departments was given. There were the captains of the "Broach" and the "Slunch," the two College boats; the captain of Cricket Tassels, R. J. Lucas; captain of Fives Tassels, Havager Boroughdale; captain of the Musical Department, R. A. S. Berry-Young; captain of the Curling Club, T. T. Vator; captain of the Spelican Team, Tute Goodhart; captain of Ushers, J. Goodwin; steward of the Paddocks, H. Beecham Wolley; Choragus, C. Wofflington. This was followed in the next number by the news that the Spelican team had played their first match of the season on March 11, against the Dorney Dubs. The Collegian Brigade, an admirable corps, which marched out as far as Brocas Hedges, was later on described as having met with an accident, for "a bull, loose in Weston's Paddock, which they passed through on the way, attacked the line, and a boy named Swage was knocked over and slightly bruised."

This went on for six months, when the editor wrote and expressed a desire to come down to Eton and see the place for himself. He was duly shown a hockey match between B. Wolley's "Field Mice" and Flenderbatch's "Jolly Boys," the match being played with tassels on the caps and all, which so impressed him that he returned to London and wrote an account of what he had seen.

With a boy named Bosvile (now Sir Alexander Bosvile Macdonald of the Isles, Bart.) I started a house paper at my tutor's. The first numbers were hectographed by ourselves, but later on we rose to the dignity of print. This literary effort received little encouragement from our tutor, who resented some perhaps flippant references to the masters, which appeared in a column of "School Gossip." More than once all the copies were seized and the production of a further issue forbidden.



Bosville was a boy of wider interests than most of my school-fellows, and being musical he was, like myself, allowed to have a piano in his room. His interest in music appears to have remained with him in after life, he having been conductor of the Bridlington Musical Society for several years.

During the time I was at Eton there were few boys who were not of English birth. The Count de Haro, a pleasant Spaniard, was quite popular, as were two or three Americans and the two sons of the Maharajah Duleep Singh. I remember that the eldest, Prince Victor, created quite a sensation shortly after his arrival by offering to bet the captain of the boats, who had spoken to him, a fiver on the Derby. Prince Victor, who was clever enough to have done anything, died a few years ago. His brother, Prince Frederick, lives in Norfolk, in which county he is deservedly popular with rich and poor.

In the "eighties" there were, of course, a number of boys at the school who, in later years, were to become leading lights in various lines of life, as well as others who developed into well-known public men and politicians. This is always the case, but occasionally a newcomer stands out so much that both masters and boys soon recognize him as possessing transcendent ability, with the practical certainty of a brilliant future.

Such a one was Gladstone, who, in the infinitely rougher Eton of the early nineteenth century, was by his schoolfellows accorded real respect, while not exposed to molestation such as usually fell to the lot of boys of austere morality and studious habits.

My uncle, the late Lord Orford, who was the great statesman's contemporary, told me that Gladstone, though not exactly popular in the school, was looked upon as an exceptional boy absolutely certain to succeed in after life. He was not bullied or interfered with in any way, his freely expressed hatred of drinking or loose language being considered merely as one of his fads. Obscene expressions roused him to fury, and boys were careful not to make use of them in his presence.

Many years later something of the same feeling prevailed about the Honourable George Nathaniel Curzon, whom everyone recognized as a very clever boy, likely to make a name for himself in after life. The latter, I have heard say, was more pampered

than Gladstone had been before him—a boy who has been too gently treated at school is rather handicapped in achieving general popularity in after life.

Mr. Arthur Bouchier, in my time a boy at Dalton's, where he had migrated on his old housemaster, Mr. Cameron, leaving Eton, was even then very keen about acting. I believe he obtained leave to give performances in his house; in any case, everyone knew his partiality for the stage and his intention of becoming an actor. Another Etonian actor, Sir Charles Hawtrey, had left before my arrival, but the memory of his merry wit and high spirits still endured.

The late General Maude I well remember as a fine athletic boy who won the steeplechase in 1881, and the mile in 1882.

Contemporaries with whom I have kept more or less in touch since Eton days were Mr. George Fitzwilliam, of Milton Abbey, the well-known and popular master of hounds; the Honourable Arthur Bligh, a fine shot, who, after having written quite good verse at school, produced a small volume which made its readers wish for more; Mr. Douglas Ainslie, a poet who, besides introducing Croce to the English public, has given us a book of interesting reminiscences. In addition to these old friends, I have constantly come across schoolmates all over the world.

Lord Carnarvon—Lord Porchester in his Eton days, who, after devoting much time and money to excavations in Egypt, has at last found his public-spirited efforts crowned by a triumphant success—was also at the school with me. At that time chemistry, rather than Egyptology, occupied his leisure hours.

There were, I fear, but few budding geniuses in the Eton of the "eighties." A highly gifted boy, however, was Harry Cust, who, to the sorrow of all who knew him, died but a short time ago. A number of my contemporaries entered the House of Commons, and some, notably the Rt. Hon. W. C. Bridgeman, at present (1922) Home Secretary, have made their mark there.

Lord Rawlinson, then Rawlinson Major, one of two sons of Sir Henry Rawlinson, used to play football in our game. The late Lord Harcourt, who on account of his delicate health never

played any games at all, was well known as being possessed of the most artistically decorated room in Eton. Right up to the ceiling quite tolerable pictures covered its walls.

At the same house, Ainger's, boarded Harold John Tennant (sixth son of Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.), who has among other things been Secretary for Scotland and Under-Secretary of State for War. As a boy he made up for his somewhat diminutive stature by the impeccable neatness of his attire. He and a friend, who was currently reported to have a new pair of trousers every week, were supposed to be the two best-dressed boys at Eton. The latter youthful D'Orsay, with a fellow Etonian, happening to be in Windsor one day, took part in seizing Maclean, a madman who threatened Queen Victoria with a pistol. As a result both boys were summoned to the Castle, where, with the whole school standing round, the Queen publicly thanked them.

Cynics declared that this showed the advantage of going up town in search of surreptitious drinks, the boys being supposed to have only just left a public-house before rushing to Her Majesty's rescue.

The Queen of course frequently drove through Eton, where she was regarded as a sort of national institution, above criticism and quite unlike the rest of the world. A small rather stern-faced little woman, simply dressed in black, the most apt description of her at this period was that by an original and clever old actor: "An opal set in jet."

Queen Victoria always took a great interest in Eton, and the school was not forgotten on the occasion of Royal weddings and functions, when the volunteers often formed part of the guard in the Windsor streets.

A certain number of Etonians were going into the Army, and I well recall the beginning of the Army Class which a certain number of boys joined merely because the work seemed more interesting than that of the ordinary curriculum. Nevertheless, there was no particular military ardour in the Eton of my time.

Lord Roberts came down after his successful Afghan campaign. The horses were taken out of his carriage, which was dragged by boys, but I do not think that any more budding officers were produced by his visit.

Years later, just before the outbreak of the Great War, I met the Field Marshal, who, I thought, had changed little in appearance since my Eton days. Still full of energy, he impressed upon us the urgent necessity for National Service, for, unlike our politicians, he foresaw the Great War which broke out shortly after.

During the time when Queen Victoria wielded such preponderating power in Europe, such a Titanic contest seemed out of the question ; indeed, the general impression was that a struggle between the Great Powers might be looked upon as a thing of the past. There was, of course, always a chance of seeing some service on the Indian frontier, in Africa, or other outlying portions of the British dominions, but except for this the life of an officer bade fair to prove rather dull and monotonous.

The expense, besides, was great. To belong to a crack regiment, with its costly subscriptions and expensive uniforms, a young fellow had to be well off. Anything like living on one's pay was then quite out of the question, for the Army of the Victorian Era was essentially a rich man's profession.

A number of Etonians, even in those days, were the sons of wealthy parents ; still the school had not yet been swamped by the offspring of *nouveaux riches* and of Americans. There were, indeed, scarcely any of the latter. Now, I am told, in consequence of the number of boys who hail from the other side of the Atlantic, complaints are heard that sufficient time is not devoted to teaching American history !

Owing to the popularity of an Eton education with wealthy foreigners, old Etonians frequently find difficulty in getting their sons into the school. This seems a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. The latter should surely have a preference over the children of aliens—even if the latter do happen to be millionaires. Winchester sets a good example in this respect, and the sooner the Eton authorities decide to follow it the better for the true interests of the great school over which they preside.

During my sojourn at Eton, little was done to the College buildings. In 1876-77 the exterior of the chapel had been more or less refaced and ornate pinnacles, for which there was no architectural authority, set up in place of the old ones which

were of simple design. Though still picturesque enough, Eton had already lost a good deal of the old world charm which had clung about it in the "forties," when the Christopher Inn had not yet been turned into a boys' house and old buildings and gardens occupied the site covered by the new schools and other innovations.

Nevertheless a considerable number of ancient houses were still standing, two of which occupied part of the ground on which stands the Memorial Hall, built, as has been sarcastically remarked, in the "Early South African style," resembling some huge municipal bath-house or lavatory, such as may be seen in manufacturing towns.

The erection of this monstrous building has considerably impaired the ancient charm of Eton. Surely if a Memorial Hall was really necessary it should have been constructed in a style harmonizing with the rest of the College!

In connection with Eton memorials, it seems strange that no one appears to have proposed the erection of the Jubilee Arch in memory of those who fell in the Great War. The arch in question, which was merely a temporary decoration in honour of the Jubilee of 1887, joined the headmaster's house to the tower of the New Schools.

Designed by Mr. A. Y. Nutt, architect to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor, and built of scaffolding and laths, it had all the appearance of a fine mediæval archway. The Archbishop of Canterbury supposed it to have been built by the Governing Body, and a celebrated architect visiting the school expressed his surprise at having on previous occasions failed to observe so interesting an architectural relic of the Middle Ages. Its appearance was dignified and beautiful, besides being in complete accord with the ancient Collegiate buildings. Had the design been carried out in bricks and stone, it would have proved a memorial truly worthy of England's foremost public school.

Just after leaving Eton, in the early "eighties," I went with my mother to Paris, for which city I conceived an affection which has ever since endured. At that time the blackened ruins of the Tuileries still remained—a striking reminder of the terrible days of the Commune, still fresh in the recollection of most Parisians.



ETON COLLEGE  
(From a drawing made in 1842)



Before the old stones and broken columns of the ruined palace were finally removed, considerable uncertainty prevailed as to whether the Tuileries would be rebuilt or not. Finally it was decided to leave an open space. Where the Palace once stood pigeons now call to each other over the grass, while a fine statue, "*Quand Même*," attests the love of France for what, at the time of its erection, were the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

Great havoc had been produced by the madness and wickedness of the Commune. The Palace of St. Cloud was burnt; so was the *Hôtel de Ville*. The Tuileries, the Ministry of Finance, the Hotel of the Legion of Honour, and the barracks of the Quai d'Orsay, of Prince Eugène, and the Rue Mouffetard were wholly or partially destroyed. The *Théâtre Lyrique*, the Port St. Martin, and the *Délassements Comiques* were burnt. The Library of the Louvre, with its eighty thousand volumes, was incinerated by those emulators of the Caliph Omar. Some half a dozen *Mairies*, two or three railway termini, and about two hundred private houses were more or less knocked to pieces by the shells of the Versaillais or destroyed by the Communists.

The many amusements of the gay capital were much to my taste, and I passed a good deal of time at café concerts, where the performance seemed more animated than anything I had seen at home.

The *Café des Ambassadeurs*, which has long since developed into a regular music-hall, was then a very unpretentious sort of place. It had no roof, consequently on a wet night the audience sat holding umbrellas over their heads. Nor did the boxes which are now on each side exist. The place was merely enclosed with shrubs and trees, through which a crowd of loungers were able to get quite a fair view of the entertainment, which it may be added was of a more amusing if less pretentious kind than that which is provided to-day.

Libert, who was then a great *serio-comique* star, had just achieved popularity for a ditty describing the woes of an individual who had lost his umbrella, while at the Scala, on the *Boulevard de Strasbourg*, Paulus sang an amusing song entitled, "*Les statues en Goguette*."



Beyond the café concerts and a theatre or two, to which I went with my mother, I saw nothing of the more frivolous side of Paris life. I should have liked to have done so, but having no friends of my own age with me had to be content to dine quietly at the hotel. I consoled myself by the thought that I would return again when I was older, which I did.

The *Rue de Rivoli*, though popular with English tourists, presented rather a shoddy appearance. During the second Empire, its tradesmen, being close to the Palace of the Tuileries, had done very well, but after the war, there being no longer a Court, the street in question became filled with rather second-rate shops selling photographs, guide-books, sham antiquities, trashy Oriental goods and *pastilles de serail*. A feature of the cheap bookshops in those days was a little glass case in the corner of the window, specially designed to attract English tourists of Bohemian tendencies. Here were stored a number of small volumes in paper covers, the titles of which made an appeal to the worst passions of visitors from across the Channel. For the most part these little books were merely bad abridgments of French novels, mostly by Paul de Kock, the title of which, translated into English, conveyed the totally wrong impression that very improper reading was to be found within. "The Little Milliner with the Three Petticoats" was one; "The Mysteries of Paris," a most inoffensive work by Eugène Sue, another.

Side by side with these quite harmless productions were displayed a number of flashy-looking guides to the amusements of Paris, the names of which smacked of wild dissipation. The "Night Side of Paris," and other similar works, embellished with lurid frontispieces, probably commanded a good sale; but from what I recollect of their execrably written contents, the voluptuaries who paid five francs for them must have been woefully disappointed. In most cases the letterpress was a mere hash-up of old stories of obsolete pleasure resorts, popular under the Second Empire, interspersed with diatribes against vice.

My mother and I stayed at the *Hôtel de Louvre*, then a huge caravanseraï, the whole of which has now been absorbed by the shop of the same name. The table d'hôte, which was good,

enjoyed a great reputation among English visitors, who sat together at enormously long tables glaring at one another while they did full justice to the menu.

The English on the Continent were formerly far less luxurious in their tastes than at the present time, when old as well as young seem eager for pleasure and excitement. Separate tables are now more or less universal in Continental pleasure and health resorts where visitors were formerly quite satisfied to take their place next the most queer and often unattractive neighbours. Whistler once declared that "one might just as well dress to sit in an omnibus as put on dress clothes to go to a table d'hôte," and most people were of this opinion. To-day, however, more or less everyone dresses at foreign resorts, where the whole standard of life has become more luxurious.

Practically every hotel of any standing now has a band, for though people are in the habit of saying that they cannot bear music at meals, experience proves that restaurants which do not provide it are not so prosperous as those which do.

Few would now be attracted by an advertisement such as was once issued by the *Hôtel de la Forêt* at Fontainebleau. This boasted as one of its advantages the absence of a casino, a theatre or tzigane band, in place of which the proprietor offered urbanity, good cooking and French comfort.

In old days visitors to Paris, while only dining at restaurants as a treat, never dreamt of the more sophisticated amusements popular to-day. English families, after a table d'hôte dinner, would be quite content to stroll along the *Rue de Rivoli* and the *Rue de la Paix*, the attraction being the brilliantly lit shop windows, which for some reasons or other (as far as I could make out, purchasers were very rare after dinner) then made a practice of keeping open quite late. This, together with an inspection of the public monuments, a visit to the *Comédie Française* to see a classical play, not one line of which the majority understood, and a few drives in the *Bois de Boulogne* was the programme which numbers of tourists carried out. The majority, being firmly convinced that it didn't matter what one wore abroad, took care to rig themselves out in their oldest and worst clothes, a custom which undoubtedly contributed towards the unpopularity of English visitors in general.

In the billiard room at the *Hôtel de Louvre* I made the acquaintance of a young American. He was extremely agreeable, and being about six years older than myself, knew a good deal about Paris and its more doubtful amusements—at least he said he did. He was a simple, unaffected young fellow, who had come over to learn French. On several occasions when I proposed that we should go and dine at some good restaurant, he frankly told me that he could not afford to do so.

Not being badly furnished with cash myself, I suggested that he had better come out as my guest. This he was rather disinclined to do, but after I had explained to him that he would be doing me a real service, he eventually consented, and we visited several cafés together. From this young American's conversation, and from certain little *louche* handbooks which I had managed to obtain, I gathered that there were a good many amusing places in Paris besides the theatres and music-halls to which we occasionally went.

The idea of the night cafés attracted me, and I longed for exciting experiences in the underworld. With the intention of having some fun, I begged the American to take me for a night round Paris, at my expense. He declared that there was nothing he should like better and suggested a date. The evening came and we had an excellent feast, but as luck would have it, when it was over, he told me that to his great disgust he was obliged to go and see a relation who had just arrived. "Some other evening," said he, "we'll see all there is to be seen!"

But that evening never came. "Jam yesterday, jam tomorrow, but never jam to-day," seemed to me to be his motto, for though when we dined together, he was full of joyous anticipation of what a time we were going to have, something which he had forgotten always intervened to send him back to his hotel before midnight.

As I was too young alone to embark upon a tour of nocturnal pleasure resorts, I eventually returned to England without having gained the longed-for experience.

This young American's behaviour rather puzzled me at the time, though it doesn't puzzle me now. Perceiving that I was of a very vivacious disposition, and anxious to get into trouble, he never had any idea of leading me into doubtful resorts.

Nevertheless, in order to prevent my rushing off in a huff, he kept me in such a state of anticipation that I never thought of asking any of the guides, who flocked round the hotel, to show me Paris by night.

A year or two later, when I knew more about Parisian pleasure resorts than my American friend had ever dreamt of, I remembered with amusement how I had listened to his very Bowdlerized descriptions of nocturnal pranks in the gay city. I have often thought that this nice young fellow behaved like a diplomat and a gentleman ; I never set eyes on him again, but sincerely hope that he prospered in after life.

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## CHAPTER III



## CHAPTER III

An easy-going tutor.—My fellow pupil.—Magdalene College, Cambridge.—Sporting undergraduates.—Architectural features.—The Pepysian Library.—Good taste of present Master.—Kingsley and Charles Stuart Parnell.—Reading and riding men.—“The way to Salisbury.”—Trips to France.—The Westminster Aquarium and what a fellow undergraduate found there!—Miss Letty Lind.—College clubs.—“The Athenæum.”—Dinner in the Bullingdon Barn.—The “Beefsteak” and “True Blue.”—Old customs and toasts.—Dr. Adams.—A tutor of Downing.—Polo and boating.—Before the days of golf.—Riding to hounds.—Cottenham.—My luck in a pony race.—A curious wager.—An Irishman’s pluck.

ON leaving Eton I went to a crammer’s, at a rectory in Buckinghamshire. The terms were high and the pupils few—four being the outside limit. At that time there was only one pupil besides myself. Our tutor, a clergyman with charming manners who had been a noted athlete in his youth, was a very broadminded man who rarely had any differences of opinion with the young men under his charge—a more reasonable pedagogue never lived.

We enjoyed great liberty, which was fully appreciated and seldom abused. Each of us kept a horse at the village inn, where a dogcart and pony were also at our disposal.

My fellow pupil, the descendant of one of Nelson’s captains, had never been to a public school owing to a fond mother thinking such places demoralizing. He had been brought up mainly at home on a new-fangled plan which had produced very old-fashioned results, among them a love of hunting, racing, boxing, dog fighting, ratting and all sorts of rough sports.

His great delight was to organize glove fights between yokels in the village, with whom he occasionally had a round or two himself. This was well enough, but I was not enthusiastic about



some of his other amusements, such as cat killing by terriers—the one thing which was known to arouse our tutor's ire.

In addition to the above pursuits, my colleague was fond of the ladies and paid frequent visits to a pretty little sweetheart not far away at Slough.

Owing to my being an old Etonian he was very civil, and though not having precisely the same tastes we got on quite well together. At that time he was a very moderate horseman, but by dint of perseverance he eventually improved, and in after years won quite a number of steeplechases—but he lost his money. This young man eagerly anticipated his coming of age, when the ample fortune left him by his father would enable him to gratify his sporting tastes to the full.

Though by no means stupid, his intellectual interests were somewhat limited, but the discipline which prevailed at the rectory was so lenient that he admitted there was little cause for complaint, nor could he resent the daily routine of study designed to perfect our knowledge of the classics.

In an ordinary way we worked three or four hours a day, but during Ascot week or when races took place at Windsor our tutor, who was a sportsman as well as a thorough man of the world, took care that working hours should not prevent our being in good time for the first race. On ordinary days we played a good deal of tennis, besides which we were frequent guests at country houses in the neighbourhood, then full of hospitable people. "Denham Court," which for generations had belonged to the family of Way, and "Swakeleys" were beautiful old houses which afforded me keen delight. The latter, alas! now seems doomed to destruction, for the property having been sold, housebreakers and builders will soon appear.

My sojourn at this tutor's, I may add, was by way of being a preparation for Cambridge. I was rather anxious to go to Trinity, but my mother, partly because a number of my family had been at Magdalene, which was closely connected with the Braybrooke Nevilles, and partly because she thought that owing to its smallness I should be kept under stricter control, insisted upon my going to the latter college. For some curious reason she

laboured under the idea that stern discipline prevailed there, and till I learnt its real character from my fellow pupil, who was destined for the same abode of learning, I was somewhat perturbed.

One fine day some months later both of us, in company with our tutor, found ourselves at Cambridge. We all three had an interview with the Reverend Mr. Patrick, tutor of Magdalene who supervised our matriculation, which at that time consisted merely in signing one's name and drinking a glass of the college sherry.

Then after bidding good-bye to our late tutor—one of the most charming men and certainly the most charming clergyman I ever came across—we went to our quarters fully fledged undergraduates. For the time being there were no rooms available for me in the college, and I was installed in comfortable lodgings in Bridge Street, close by. At that time a number of undergraduates lived out, and it was considered rather an advantage to do so.

In due course I was rigged out in a cap and gown; the tassel of the former was usually cut, but as one did not wear academic costume often I left mine untouched. All the pomp and glory which was formerly attached to certain privileged undergraduates had long disappeared; gone the gorgeous blue and gold gowns worn by noblemen, together with the gold tassels to their caps which originated the expressions "tufts" and "tuft hunting."

The next most shining men had been Fellow-Commoners, with their gowns trimmed with gold or silver lace, velvet caps or top hats. At Magdalene I believe this privilege has in one or two cases been recently revived.

It seems a pity that the ornamental relics of other days should have been suppressed. The wearing of such gowns might at least have been made optional, there being no possible harm in an undergraduate appearing in elaborate old-world attire provided he or his parents are able and willing to pay for it. Thackeray, I fancy, was more or less responsible for its abolition in the middle of the last century.

Peers and Fellow-Commoners formerly enjoyed a number of other privileges. They could, if they liked, crack their bottle—or their joke, if they had one—in the common parlour or com-

bination room with the Dons, with whom at one time they were often on very intimate terms. I cannot say that anything of the sort prevailed at Magdalene in my day, for we saw very little of our Dons, who were content not to trouble us to attend lectures unless we showed great keenness to do so.

The college was then easy going to an extreme, besides being permeated by a sporting tone, quite a number of undergraduates, like the Honourable Lancelot Lowther, belonging to families which for generations had been identified with sport. Many of my contemporaries kept hunters and polo ponies, while one actually had a coach (which stood some little distance out of the town) and drove four in hand to Newmarket when racing was going on there.

A certain proportion of the college, nevertheless, took a more serious view of the objects of a university career and devoted a good part of their time to reading and attending the lectures which less studious men neglected. Among these were Mr. Arthur Edward Gill, now a Metropolitan Police Magistrate, and the Honourable Leonard Tyrwitt, who became a Canon of St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

Curiously enough at the end of the eighteenth century Magdalene had been noted as an evangelical college, and its undergraduates, on account of their temperate habits, nicknamed "tea drinkers," a taunt which could never have been levelled at the men of my own time.

From 1781 to 1803, Magdalene was distinguished for its theological students, the "Norrisian Prize" being taken no less than fifteen times during that period by scholars educated within its walls.

During the nineteenth century the tone of the college seems to have completely changed. In my undergraduate days, Magdalene, though perhaps rather lax in its discipline, was prosperous enough, but some years after I had gone down it sank to quite a low ebb, and I believe that for several years there was rather a scarcity of undergraduates on the books. With the mastership of Mr. A. C. Benson, however, the college entered upon a new era, and now, besides having a far larger number of undergraduates than ever before, has developed into a real abode of learning, where young men are expected to work

instead of being merely members of a pleasant sporting community.

The advent of Mr. Benson did enormous good. A rather amusing instance of his popularity as a writer is that his book, "From a College Window," which had a great sale in the United States, has incidentally caused a large number of visitors from the other side of the Atlantic to go and see Magdalene.

"We get a lot of Americans here now, sir," the porter recently told a friend of mine.

"To enquire about the Pepysian Library, I suppose?"

"Lor, no, sir, they all of 'em ask to see the 'College Window'!"

A former porter, old George Fleet, was quite an institution. Gladstone, one day, after a visit to the Pepysian Library, while on the Bridge, met someone who asked him if he had noticed Fleet, who was a great character? Back went the Grand Old Man, took the porter by the hand, made a long speech about "Years of faithful service" and thereby won old George's heart—and vote.

From an architectural point of view the college buildings were of some interest. Just before my arrival the front of Magdalene, as well as the side facing the river, had been subjected to a complete restoration. A number of unsightly buildings which had disfigured the bank of the Cam had been demolished, the college being no doubt improved by the lawns which took their place.

The restoration of a good deal of brickwork was no doubt necessary, but it is to be regretted that the modern craze for architectural uniformity led to the obliteration of some old features, including a quaint little window opening out of the porter's lodge which is shown in all the old pictures of the college. It would have been better to have replaced the posts to which Pepys alludes in his Diary! "Restorers," however, too often prefer to destroy rather than to replace!

The interior of the chapel had undergone a drastic restoration during the middle of the nineteenth century. The ancient high-pitched roof, which for years had been concealed by a ceiling of classical design, had been once more exposed to view—a huge eighteenth century altar-piece removed and two niches (since adorned with statues) restored to their pristine state. All the

old pews and woodwork at this restoration had been replaced by new seating of the usual modern Gothic design.

At the same time, structural alterations had remodelled the west end, where an ornate gallery of little artistic merit was for some reason or other set up. The general effect of these alterations was that the chapel had lost all appearance of antiquity and looked completely new.

The opening out of the roof and east window were no doubt an improvement, but the old woodwork, simple as it was, must certainly have been better than the new, which, entirely devoid of character, gave the impression of having been turned out at so much per yard.

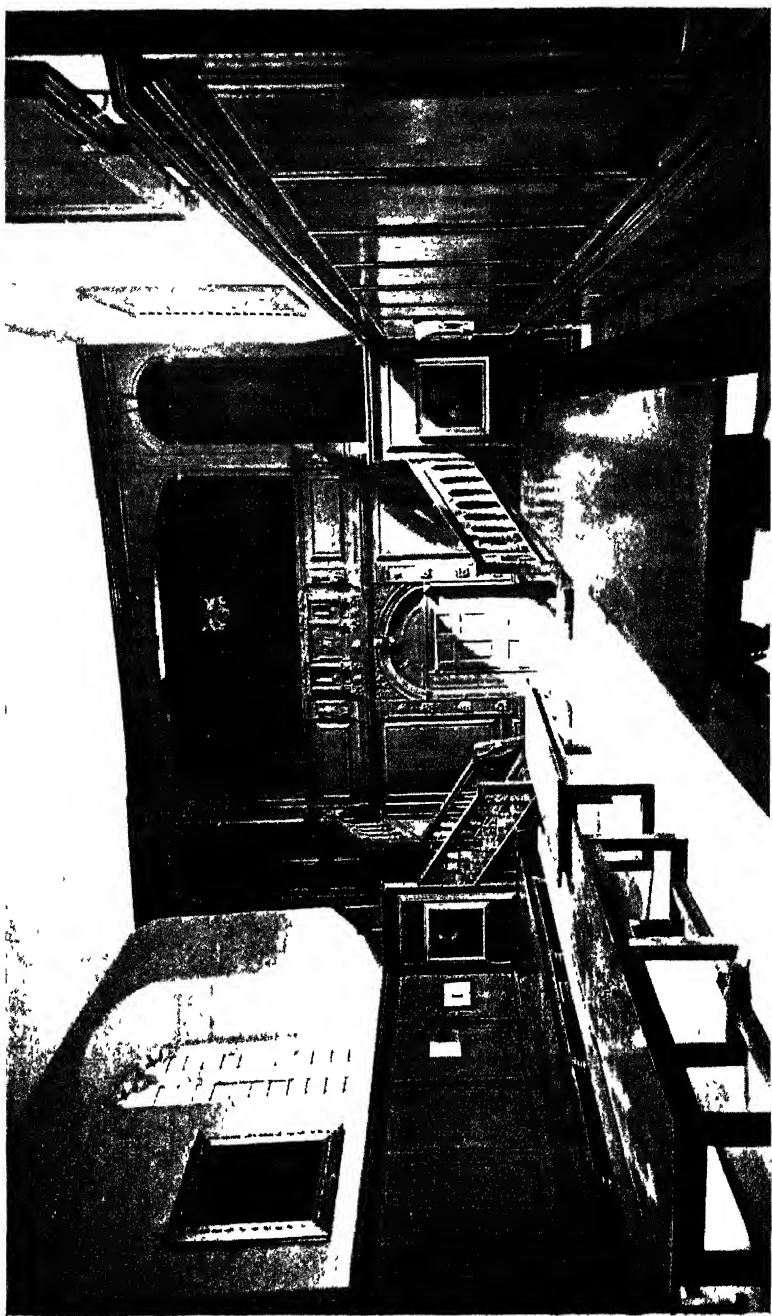
During my undergraduate days there was no music during the services—there had never been any, it was understood, since the Reformation. The modern desire for uniformity has since altered this, for shortly after I went down a small organ was placed in the gallery, which innovation some said hastened the end of a very conservative Fellow, the late Professor Newton, well known as a great authority on ornithology.

The College Hall, probably at the same time as the Chapel, had had its roof filled up with rooms which still remain above the ceiling—the ancient cusping being visible in places. Though at various times schemes have been mooted to open up this roof, they have not been carried out, which, considering that the wainscoting beneath would scarcely be suited to the Gothic style, is certainly a matter for congratulation.

Under the mastership of Mr. A. C. Benson this woodwork has been painted in very appropriate fashion, while a certain amount of stained glass has also been added in the windows, with the result that the hall presents what chroniclers of the eighteenth century called "a neat and appropriate appearance."

Pepys, whose portrait hangs on the walls, must as an undergraduate have often dined in this quaint little College Hall. It is to be lamented that there are no allusions in the famous Diary to enlighten us as to what its aspect was in those days.

Of the Pepysian Library, which of course is the great treasure of Magdalene, the undergraduates in my time knew scarcely anything. I believe that according to the terms of Pepys's



HALL, MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, 1884



bequest should one book out of it chance to disappear the entire library passes to another college. This being so, a Fellow of Magdalene was always supposed to be in attendance when anyone came to see the books, for which reason, no doubt, the authorities did not encourage visits.

The Pepysian Library appears to have become more accessible within recent years, arrangements having been made by which anyone with proper credentials easily obtains admission.

One of the books in this library, I understand, contains an account of the Dodo, the writer having been the last human being who actually saw that now extinct bird alive.

The present Master, Mr. A. C. Benson, has, in many ways, done much for the college, and such recent alterations as have taken place have been carried out with taste and discretion. On the river side a new block of buildings, with rooms for undergraduates, is a somewhat striking innovation which of necessity gives the place rather a cramped appearance, but in view of the increased number of men at the college the erection of these new buildings, which are of good design, seems to have been unavoidable.

Magdalene, being a small college, with comparatively slender endowments, has not produced any particular brilliant scholars, its main claim to literary fame being its close association with Samuel Pepys. The only modern celebrities I can recall as having studied there are Charles Kingsley, Charles Stewart Parnell and Mr. "Abington" Baird, a spendthrift millionaire who, at the end of the last century, rendered himself notorious in sporting and Bohemian circles.

Parnell, it always used to be reported in my time, had been expelled for knocking down a railway porter at Cambridge Station. I do not know whether this is true or not, but in any case his sojourn at Cambridge did not last very long.

Traditions still prevailed of the riotous scenes which occurred during the sale by auction of Parnell's belongings in his rooms, almost opposite the college.

The truth appears to be that Parnell was sent down—not expelled—in 1869, and the Master and Fellows fully expected he would come up again. Whether the "porter story" is true or not



is uncertain, but there was undoubtedly an assault upon someone.

In an old Magdalene cricket score book, formerly in the college, there was C. S. Parnell "run out," which, however, was crossed out and the word "not" written over it—a correction always said to have been made by Parnell himself, thus even then anxious to defy the Saxon.

Of Charles Kingsley's college career there is little to say; while the undergraduate days of Mr. "Abington" Baird were not of interest to anybody.

An old Magdalene man who had quite a distinguished career was Francis Penrose, surveyor of St. Paul's Cathedral, who died at a great age in 1903. He had a considerable reputation as an architect. When an undergraduate of Magdalene, he had rowed against Oxford in 1840, 1841 and 1842.

He built a new entrance gate at the college, and I think I am right in saying was responsible for the restorations of the exterior which have already been mentioned. In 1884 he was made one of the first honorary members of the college, which possesses a copy of his picture by Sargent.

Mr. Penrose's mother, as "Mrs. Markham," became well known as a writer for the young, and he was the original Richard, "the good boy," in her famous history.

Though I lived out of college a great part of my time was passed in my friends' rooms within its walls, where they dispensed a liberal hospitality.

A good many of my fellow undergraduates were fatherless young men who, on coming of age, were to inherit substantial fortunes. A few over twenty-one had already done so, and on the whole the standard of living was more extravagant than in other colleges. On the other hand, there were a certain number of scholars who, together with a few reading men, led a studious life and lived in a simple manner.

The two sets mixed but little; indeed the only occasion I recollect their having done so was after the Magdalene boat had made a bump on the river. Though the boat in question was entirely manned by reading men, the sporting set became elated at this triumph, and by way of celebrating it obtained

leave from the authorities to give the crew a dinner in the College Hall.

A large number of guests who were not rowing men were invited, and the scene of unbridled conviviality which ensued fairly astonished the studious set. Though some of the latter prided themselves upon a knowledge of history, certain old English songs, popular with the sporting set, came to them as rather a shock. One of these ditties, "The Way to Salisbury," had, it was said, been handed down through generations of lively undergraduates ever since the days of Queen Elizabeth. Whether this was true or not, I never heard the song anywhere else or saw it in print, for which reason I quote part of it here. The beginning, as far as I recollect, ran :—

As I was going to Salisbury upon a summer's day,  
I met a pretty maiden, and she was going that way ;  
Yes, she was going that way, sir, just beyond the hill,  
And we jogged along together, with a Tiddy-fol-lol-de-ril.

And as we jogged together, side by side,  
By some mysterious motion her garter came untied ;  
Her garter came untied, sir, just above the knee,  
As we jogged along together, with a Tiddy-fol-lol-de-re.

The remaining verses, which were rather Rabelaisian, I can but imperfectly recall. "The tying of the garter, the like was never seen," is a line which indicates their spirit—the tune was simple but pretty.

After the songs, some of which were not altogether to the taste of the more serious undergraduates, had ended there was a good deal of cheering, "whooping," and general disorder. An enormous quantity of plates were smashed, and one or two painted glass windows of the College Hall narrowly escaped destruction.

Only with difficulty was the place cleared, and long after midnight the quadrangle resounded with hunting cries and other ebullitions of Bacchanalian vivacity, which the authorities thought it best not to attempt to quell. Their policy was to ignore post-prandial demonstrations unless they seemed likely to produce a scandal.

As I have said, attendance at lectures was more or less optional, and some undergraduates never troubled about them at all. Chapel, however, one had occasionally to attend on week-days and always once on Sunday. Dinner in hall was not compulsory, but a charge was made for it whether men partook of it or not.

The main source of worry to the authorities was keeping the kitchen bills of undergraduates within a reasonable figure. The latter entertained one another freely, drank a good deal of champagne, and occasionally had big dinners, followed by roulette.

The Honourable and Reverend Latimer Neville, afterwards sixth Lord Braybrooke, then Master of the college, except in the case of serious lapses, interfered with us but little. Known as a dignified figure and a scholar of some distinction—he was Master of Magdalene for fifty years, for fifty years rector of Heydon, and married for fifty years—I rather fancy he brought off all three jubilees the same year!

The Rev. Mr. Patrick, tutor of the college, was a man of great tact. On one occasion a sporting undergraduate (now a parson in the West of England) having, contrary to rule, had champagne brought into hall in a beer jug, this tutor having heard of it sent for him next morning.

"There appears to have been something doubtful about your beer in hall last night, Mr. X.," said he.

The undergraduate, perceiving that he had been spotted, replied :

"Yes, sir, and there won't be any doubt about it in the future."

"That's all right," rejoined Mr. Patrick, "good morning." And the matter was at an end.

Many a tutor would have raved and stormed as if the young man had committed a crime, with the probable result of a repetition of the offence, whereas this tactful treatment effectually prevented its recurrence.

\* Our tutor was very accommodating about granting leave. If an undergraduate wished to go away for two or three days, he had simply to leave a line saying that urgent business called him to town. Trips to various racing centres I often indulged

in, while with a friend belonging to the college I more than once went over to France. A few years my senior, he knew a good deal about how to have a good time in Paris. We had excellent dinners at the *Maison d'Or*, lots of champagne, boxes at music-halls and theatres, and plenty of pleasant female society. I enjoyed myself hugely; the social liberty of the gay capital where one was (and is) allowed to do what one likes being much to my taste.

The Paris of those days had no luxurious dancing place like the *Abbaye de Thélème*, the *Perroquet* or other expensive night resort. On the other hand, the public balls, such as the *Elysée*, *Montmartre* and the night cafés, were more characteristically Parisian than anything I have seen since. On the whole, however, I am rather inclined to prefer the Paris of to-day.

A favourite resort of young men at the University at that time was the Royal Aquarium, Westminster, which opened with a great flourish as a sort of educational institution, had soon drifted into being a mere lounge offering a daily round of what the advertisements called "perpetual enjoyment."

In the afternoon and in the evening a sort of mild music-hall entertainment was given on the stage in the great central hall. But the speciality of the place was its acrobats, several very clever and daring performers being brought forward by Mr. Farini. Zazel, Zaeo, and one or two other female gymnasts performed really wonderful feats, the former making a sensation by being shot out of a cannon (by a spring) and the latter producing a great stir owing to the ridiculous attitude of certain County Councillors who wanted to inspect her back.

For some reason or other the Aquarium was looked at askance by the Puritan party, and on more than one occasion its licence was only obtained in face of serious opposition. The rather gloomy edifice was supposed to be haunted by beautiful houris of an accommodating kind—I never saw much beauty there myself, but the idea appealed to very young men about town, boys at the University, or at a tutor's.

Undergraduates used to spend a good deal of time walking about in the place and chaffing the stall girls, who invited one to buy useless knick-knacks, name-plates, and bottles of

scent. The girls in question would not be thought at all attractive to-day; nevertheless, some did very well for themselves.

A rich young fellow belonging to our college, having had a very good dinner, was, while at the Aquarium, seized with what might euphemistically have been called faintness, in which condition he was noticed by a stall girl, who, happening to know who he was, looked after him and took him safely home. As a result of this the two were soon on pretty good terms, with the result that the girl eventually declared that the young man had promised to marry her.

This, though weak-minded enough, he did not at all want to do; consequently when she announced her intention of coming down to Cambridge to expose him the young fellow was very much upset. Somehow, however, his mother—who, it should be added, before her marriage had been in something of the same line as the stall girl and knew the “business”—got wind of what was afoot.

Taking the same train from London, she confronted the astonished damsel on Cambridge Station platform, and the girl, after being utterly routed in a tremendous battle, dejectedly returned to town. Flushed with victory, the older lady then came on to Magdalene. Here, sitting at the head of a luncheon table of undergraduates, of whom the writer was one, she gave a very vivacious description of the whole affair, topping up with some lurid experiences of London life in the sixties, which were warmly cheered. The girl, it may be added, shortly afterwards married a wealthy young officer, so everyone (except the latter's relatives) was pleased.

Entertaining the fair sex was, of course, strictly forbidden; nevertheless, occasionally some charmer would be smuggled into rooms, and even into college itself. In old days this was not unusual, as is shown by a quaint design of Rowlandson's representing a coquettish-looking damsel being hauled up by a rope to join a party of roystering undergraduates in a room above.

Though liable to be arrested and punished by being incarcerated in what was known as the “Spinning House,” “Cyprians” were not unknown at Cambridge. Dr. Glyn, a Don of another

age, having met one of these ladies and got into conversation with her in a public place, made a very apt remark. On leaving her he inquired of a friend who had noticed him who she was.

"A lady of a suspicious character," was the reply.

"I fancied," said the Doctor, "there was something Athanasian in her looks."

"How so?"

"She seemed to be a *Quicunque vult*."

There was a capital theatre at Cambridge, well managed by Mr. Redfern, afterwards Mayor, who always engaged good companies. Here, in the early "eighties," I saw Miss Letty Lind, then quite a girl, playing the principal part in "My Sweetheart," a piece in which the American actress, Miss Minnie Palmer, had scored a great success. Full of vivacity and of charming personal appearance, Miss Letty Lind received a rapturous welcome from the undergraduates, many of whom were later to applaud her as the dainty dancer and principal attraction of the London Gaiety.

There was another theatre, or rather entertainment hall, in the suburbs of Cambridge at which a good deal of rowdiness sometimes prevailed. Undergraduates would make a great row there and occasionally the piano player would be made to give way to some amateur performer—I have indeed played the piano there myself.

Notwithstanding this, quite passable touring companies sometimes visited the place; "Billee Taylor," for instance, with a number of pretty girls excited great enthusiasm and filled the house with an audience which joined in the choruses with tremendous fervour.

There were several dining clubs at Cambridge in those days.

In Magdalene, the Yellowhammers used to have dinners every term, while the Athenæum, recruited from various colleges, once a fortnight held what was called a "Tea"—in reality a sumptuous banquet, given in one of the member's rooms.

For a time there was a great craze for having elaborately decorated menu son such occasions.

As a rule the cooking was quite good, the best food being then supplied by the kitchen of Sidney Sussex, from which a

large number of men at other colleges were in the habit of obtaining their meals.

The Athenæum colours were red and white stripes, a ribbon of which, across the shirt front, was worn at the "Teas." Otherwise there were no ceremonies, not even toasts, though a good many bumpers of champagne were tossed off by friends drinking each other's health.

There were club rooms on the first floor of a house, somewhere opposite "John's Gate," but in those days these were very little used except for club business and elections. After I went down, however, the "Teas" began to be held there instead of in member's rooms, and I fancy this custom still prevails.

When I first was elected a member of the Athenæum the "Teas" were rather staid affairs, but later on they became exceedingly lively, being generally followed by roulette, at which I was always very unlucky.

Though in a great measure a sporting club, there were members who never rode; the majority, however, indulged in sport of some kind or other.

An annual fixture was a cricket match, the Athenæum against the Bullingdon Club, at Oxford, the team from Cambridge staying at the Mitre. There was always a dinner in the Bullingdon Barn, with toasts, speeches, and a good deal of jollity and horseplay.

The first year I went the proceedings were comparatively—only comparatively—orderly, but on a subsequent occasion a terrible rag ensued after dinner. It began while one of our team was singing a song—however he didn't sing long, being soon overwhelmed by a shower of rolls and missiles of every kind. Everyone in the barn was throwing and fighting; one man only escaped an ice pail by an inch. I never saw such a scene. All the tables were smashed and every glass broken. How anyone got out of the place without serious injury I never understood! Somehow or other we fought our way to our drag and got back to Oxford. The whole thing was good humoured, but there was no second day's play, and I believe no more Bullingdon-Athenæum matches for several years.

Two curious old Cambridge clubs were "The Beefsteak" and the "True Blue," which had their dinners at The Red Lion,

The "Beefsteak" consisted of very few members; I never remember more than five, sometimes there were only two. The club possessed a quantity of fine old silver, for its records went well back into the eighteenth century.

There was a great deal of beef about the dinner, at which only beer was allowed to be drunk. Then came port and some ultra Rabelaisian toasts, followed by the singing of "Drops of Brandy" and the "Muffin Man," according to immemorial usage, the music being furnished by "White-headed Bob," an old Cambridge character who played the fiddle.

The only individual who was thoroughly acquainted with the elaborate ritual of the "Beefsteak" dinner, which had been handed down for over a hundred years, was Dunn, the old waiter at The Red Lion, who prompted the President when he was not quite certain of what he ought to do.

A sort of uniform was worn by members of the club, consisting of a blue cut-away coat, with brass buttons, buff waistcoat, and a bull's head pin in the tie.

I rather believe that after having been dormant for some time the "Beefsteak" has been revived?

Some years ago an article appeared in a London magazine which contained an account of the club as well as illustrations of the silver plate, some of which dates back to the eighteenth century.

As having preserved an exact record of the old English hunting dinner with its ceremonial, the "Beefsteak" is worth the attention of those interested in social history, though the nature of some of the toasts scarcely commends itself to serious students, who in this country, at least, are apt to ignore anything contrary to the present standard of bourgeois respectability.

The real drawback of the "Beefsteak" dinner was the amount of port which members and guests, of whom I was often one, were obliged to drink. There was a standard form of wine-glass, which at every toast had to be drained at a gulp, bumpers being obligatory with the almost inevitable result of a bad headache next day. Delicate men could not face the ordeal at all. A sensible innovation, which would have in no wise impaired the time-honoured



procedure, would have been to reduce the glasses to a reasonable size.

Another dining club was the "True Blue," the members of which wore eighteenth century dress and white wigs. They had a more ordinary dinner than the "Beefsteak," though there were old-fashioned toasts and other obsolete usages, survivals of another age. The membership was very small, usually about three, it being difficult to get men to join on account of the expense of the costume.

Also there was an initiation of a trying kind, every new member being obliged to drink a whole bottle of claret out of a special glass, which sent the wine all over him if he did not drink it straight off—a dreadful ordeal which no one can have enjoyed.

I often dined with the "True Blue," with whom one was bound to have a jolly if rather Bacchanalian time.

Some of our most lively evenings at Magdalene were those at which we entertained an old member of the college or other congenial visitor. Also, we were fond of giving dinners to certain local sporting characters, well known to Cambridge men of a past generation.

One of these was Dr. Adams, a charming old-world character and sympathetic man who might have stepped straight out of one of Surtees's books. A constant follower of the Cambridgeshire Hounds, when not professionally engaged he lived entirely for the chase, which he had followed for very many years. The doctor, a neatly dressed, trim figure, mounted on a useful cob, was very popular with sporting undergraduates, whose idiosyncrasies he understood. Often, too, did we dine with him in his snug little house, where everyone was glad to hear his recollections over a glass of fine old port.

His influence on young men was excellent, for he enjoyed their real respect. Everyone liked this charming old man, who never allowed his devotion to hunting to interfere with his professional duties, which were sometimes arduous, for he had quite a good practice in Cambridge.

An even more original character was the tutor of Downing, "Perkins" by name, who at one time was the secretary of the Cambridgeshire Hunt.

He, too, mixed a great deal with undergraduates, and I have often met him dining with sporting men, for he loved a jolly evening, when he was apt to let himself go a good deal more than Doctor Adams ever did ; in fact he could be as lively after dinner as any young Freshman. Nevertheless he was reputed to be a first-rate business man and managed the affairs of Downing College in a most satisfactory manner.

While we passed our evenings in very jolly fashion, the out-of-door life was not neglected. We played a fair amount of cricket. Just before I had gone up the college eleven, containing two blues—Lord Hawke and W. N. Roe—had been quite a good one. Lord Throwley, who had been in the Eton eleven, was another good cricketer. In 1881 the college had made some terrific scores in a local match—W. N. Roe 415 not out, Forbes 331, Lord Throwley 120 ; the score at one time stood 400 for one wicket.

Then there was polo, that knightly and gentlemanlike game which originated in Persia, where in ancient days it was the favourite pastime of Princes and Khans.

I still think of delightful summer afternoons passed on the river. I was especially fond of sailing in a canoe, and the habit I had of almost invariably getting upset did not spoil my enjoyment in the least. Deep water no longer had any terrors for me—as I have before mentioned I had suddenly learnt to swim and rather liked putting my new-found powers to the test.

Golf none of us played, the game in question not having as yet emerged from the unobtrusive position it had occupied in England ever since the days of Charles II at Blackheath, and being regarded as little more than a quaint survival from that picturesque epoch.

Few, however, to-day will be inclined to agree with that unsympathetic critic, who described the game as consisting in hitting a little ball and then going after it to hit it again, and so on for three hours by the clock, the whole thing, according to him, being somewhat akin to an incipient form of mental paralysis.

While this criticism is no doubt too severe, it is difficult for a non-golfer to understand the wild enthusiasm which golf seems frequently to arouse. It certainly takes people into the open

air and gives them mild exercise, but a country walk, which is capable of stimulating thoughtful minds, does the same in rather a better way.

"I haven't time to read; you see when I'm not working I play golf," one enthusiast told the writer.

By means of alternate doses of golf and sleep, thought may easily be reduced to a minimum.

The writer once spent a week in a country house where the unvarying day's programme of everyone, except himself, was as follows: They breakfasted about ten and then went out to play golf till one, when they lunched, with a snooze to follow. They then proceeded to play golf again till it was time to dress for dinner, taking tea on the links. They dined at eight, and thoroughly tired out generally went to bed about a quarter to ten.

What sort of life was this for civilized beings to lead?

Besides playing polo in the summer, a good many of my college, including myself, hunted in the winter with the University Drag or with the Cambridgeshire Hounds.

The undergraduates' steeplechase meeting at Cottenham always aroused considerable excitement among us. It was then an informal affair, not under National Hunt Rules, and was by way of not being recognized by the Dons, who, however, winked at it.

In these days, judging by the newspapers in which illustrations of these races have appeared, Cottenham has been placed upon a recognized basis and established as a regular University event.

Though the meeting in my day was somewhat primitive in its arrangements, it was none the less amusing for that. Riding men who had their own horses or ponies ran them, and those who hadn't became temporary possessors of old stagers out of the two great livery stables which supplied hunters to sporting undergraduates. Mr. Saunders generally provided a winner or two for his clients, but the principal events usually went to men whose horses were well known with the Drag.

When I first went up the Honourable John Baring, now Lord Revelstoke, the Master, was always splendidly mounted, and did justice to his horses too, being a fine horseman whose seat

in the saddle was akin to perfection. At Cottenham, as far as I remember, he won every race in which he rode. His successor was the Honourable Lionel Holland, a most intrepid rider whose ardour in the hunting field or over a steeplechase course no falls could abate.

During the week before Cottenham a number of dinners were held, at which the chances of the various entries were excitedly discussed, while a good deal of champagne was drunk which did not tend to caution in the way of wagers. All sorts of wild bets were laid, while those who made a book occasionally found that whatever horse won they were bound to lose.

In the course of one of these festivals, having got into a discussion as to the merits of a pony, I was rashly induced to match it against another belonging to a friend. I had acquired this pony over the roulette board, an undergraduate who had lost all his ready money having sold it me for a moderate sum.

But the pony was moderate too. My friend, on the other hand, possessed quite a good one. In addition to this, he was not at all a bad jockey, his services in that capacity always being in considerable request at Cottenham.

The name of my steed, a rather varminty-looking roan, was Ping Pong, a little animal which had been useful enough to me. On it I had won a more or less impromptu match on the Cambridge polo ground, where I had beaten Mr. Marcus Milner, who a few years later married the Duchess of Montrose.

I should add that the name of this pony was not derived from the parlour game, which was then not yet in existence, but from a popular music-hall ditty sung by the "Great Vance":

Ping Pong for breakfast, Ping Pong for lunch,  
Ping Pong for dinner and tea;  
Ping Pong for supper—when I'm in bed,  
Ping Pong I'm dreaming of thee.

During the next few days I dreamt a good deal about Ping Pong and the money I was going to lose over it, for besides having made the match I had backed myself to win it.

The conditions, as far as I can remember, were one mile on the flat for twenty-five pounds, catch weights, owners up. In the way of weights I had a slight advantage, which was cancelled

by the superiority of my antagonist's jockeyship and the superior class of his pony.

There was a good deal of ante-post betting on the result. I got very fair odds, and, it being a case of in for a penny in for a pound, backed myself to win about two hundred pounds.

My friend also backed himself. He was a hot favourite, but being extremely astute in turf matters he got on at a favourable price. Altogether, including the stake, he stood to win about three hundred pounds over this match, which with considerable reason he regarded as a certainty.

The great day arrived, and in due course I found myself at the starting post in a by no means jubilant mood. When I contrasted the appearance of the somewhat scraggy-looking Ping Pong with that of my friend's beautifully groomed mount my heart sank down into the new racing boots which one of the robber tribe of Cambridge tradesmen had obligingly supplied.

Here was I rigged out in cap and jacket going to make a fool of myself, besides losing a good deal of money! I cursed my own stupidity and inwardly swore never to make a match after dinner again.

For a time after we had started my antagonist cantered carelessly by my side. Confident and unconcerned, at times he allowed me to lead, but just before we came to the turn which led into the straight he suddenly shot to the front, leaving me some three or four lengths behind.

I gave Ping Pong several good wallops, to which that gallant animal did not respond. Accustomed to pretty rough usage from novices who had ridden it at polo, the pony thought little of my blows. A touch of the spur, however, woke it up a bit. As, however, it was now clear to me that I must lose, I soon let whip and spur alone and abandoned myself to the melancholy task of contemplating the other pony's hindquarters as, with the assurance of easy victory, its rider galloped towards the winning post. But just before that goal was reached something happened.

Certain that he had won, my friend kept rather a loose rein, profiting by which, just opposite the entrance to the ground marked off as a saddling enclosure, his pony suddenly wheeled round. The saddling enclosure in the pony's mind was connected

with the idea of home, which was where it wanted to go, and in spite of whip and spur it made a determined effort to reach the entrance.

Eventually the jockey mastered his steed, but having joyfully seen my chance I managed to wake Ping Pong up with a good wallop and just got home by a neck.

A scene of great excitement ensued—warm congratulations from my backers and cries of execration from those who had lost made a great din for some minutes.

The defeated jockey, for his part, took the whole thing very well, frankly admitting that his carelessness had lost the race, but many who had backed him did not fall in with this philosophic view, upbraiding him for having so carelessly lost them their money.

"It's all very well for them to abuse me," said he, "but they seem to forget that I dropped a good deal of money over the race myself. Anyhow, I'm glad you had a good win; I shall hope for better luck next time."

That evening, I remember, we had a tremendous dinner, with toasts and songs. A noble sportsman, having had the bad luck to kill a horse he had hired from Saunders by a fall at a fence, sang with considerable pathos "The place where the old horse died"—he might have been riding it for years!

More than one verse of the song in question being too much for the audience, the singer eventually collapsed, overwhelmed by a hurricane of miscellaneous missiles, a playful demonstration to which every singer or speech-maker was exposed.

As for Ping Pong, that gallant little animal which had come to me over the roulette board eventually took the same path into the possession of a member of my college—now Lt.-Colonel Sneyd.

Cottenham in those days was a very jolly old-fashioned affair and there was little commercialism about it. Some years later, however, an undesirable money-making spirit appeared. One sharp young sportsman, riding up to some bookmakers on a sorry-looking horse, got ten to one against his mount. When the race started, however, he was seen to be bestriding a very superior animal which easily came in first. A great row was made about it and the "knowing one" forced to disgorge and

apologize. This cleared the air and the old sportsmanlike spirit revived.

The Magdalene men were great frequenters of Newmarket, where they generally backed losers. Win or lose, however, they were always ready to bet about almost anything—from time to time many queer wagers were laid.

I remember after dinner one winter's evening the conversation turned upon how long it would take a fully dressed man to take off all his clothes in the water.

The son of Mad Windham of Felbrigg (as to whose paternity there had been a famous lawsuit), being given to making wild bets, offered two to one against anyone taking all their clothes off in the water during that present week.

An Irish undergraduate of the college, Hornidge by name, said he would take the bet, and after some discussion it was agreed that two days later the latter, who had taken two hundred pounds to a hundred, should attempt this feat.

In due course a party of us went to an appointed spot outside Cambridge, and there Hornidge, fully dressed in a grey suit and boots, plunged into either the Cam or one of its tributaries. The day was bitterly cold for us onlookers. What the swimmer must have felt like, goodness only knows!

He was a tall powerful man, well over six feet high, endowed with great pluck and determination, both of which were needed for the ordeal upon which he had entered.

A proficient swimmer, he divested himself of coat, waistcoat and shirt with comparative ease. Though he took some time about it, his boots came off more easily than one might have thought. Trousers were a more difficult matter, but eventually he successfully got them off too.

Nothing but his socks were now left, but these were harder to pull off than all the rest of his clothes put together. Blue with cold he continued swimming and treading water for a very considerable time. Every now and then he would rest between desperate efforts to tear off his soaked and clinging footgear.

One sock he did eventually get off, but when he had done it he was so chilled and feeble that those on the bank and in the punt by the swimmer's side began to discuss the question of pulling him out.

A spirited discussion ensued. A number of men declared that it was murder to let Hornidge remain in the water, while others who had laid against him replied that in that case he must acknowledge himself beat.

The swimmer, weak as he was, would not give in. He renewed his attempts to get the sock off, but soon began to look so queer that there were more calls for him to be pulled out.

After an animated discussion, which someone aptly remarked would probably only end with Hornidge's death, Windham shouted out :

"Will you own yourself beat?"

"No," said the swimmer, who was growing feebler every minute.

"Well," continued Windham, who was a good-natured fellow and cared nothing about money, "let everybody agree to have all bets off."

All present shouted agreement and Hornidge just managed to signify his assent.

He had been in the icy water a very considerable time, and when pulled out frightened us all by his appearance. Wrapped in blankets and driven quickly back to college, he was put to bed. Three days later he was out hunting with the Cambridge-shire.

This was the greatest example of bull-dog pluck I ever saw in my life. The difficulty of removing any part of one's clothing in fairly warm deep water is great enough, but to do so when it is bitterly cold puts an enormous strain upon human endurance.





## CHAPTER IV



## CHAPTER IV

The Jubilee of 1887.—Ernest Benzon.—Spendthrifts and the Turf.—Mr. Herring.—Sir George Chetwynd.—Mr. Abington Baird.—The lure of Paris.—The *Maison Dorée*.—Burning of the *Opéra Comique*.—The *Chat Noir*.—Masked balls.—The *Quadrille Excentrique*.—Rise and fall of General Boulanger.—Paulus.—“*En revenant de la revue*.”—General de Gallifet.—Diplomats then and now.—The French Turf.—A lucky bet.—Continental watering places.—Trouville in the eighties.—A deplorable Marquis and his attractive wife.—A curious dream.—Good-bye to Europe.—I start for Tehran.

IN 1887, the Jubilee year, there were all sorts of Jubilee things and even people. A girl who used to be seen a great deal in the boxes at the London Pavilion was nicknamed the “Jubilee Virgin.” Though nice-looking enough, she was not really beautiful. I may add that there was no reason to think that she was unworthy of her name.

Benzon, the “Jubilee Juggins,” certainly deserved his. A more silly young man never walked up Piccadilly. I used to see him in the smoking room of old Long’s Hotel, which a number of sporting men then used as a sort of lounge. Sitting in front of the fire one day, he pulled a jewel-case out of his pocket and showed me the contents, two diamond earrings.

“Not bad,” said he, “I just got them across the road at Henry Lewis’s. What do you think they cost?”

“Oh!” said I, “I’m sure I couldn’t tell.”

“Only five hundred,” was his reply. “They’ll do very well for a present. Of course I chalked them up. A little more or less don’t make much difference; I already owe different tradesmen about thirty thousand. What do you owe?”

He was not then of age and had created a sensation by driving up to the dépôt of a cavalry regiment at Canterbury, where he tried to enlist. But they wouldn’t have him, by which they showed good sense, as he would have only demoralized his fellow troopers.

I once drove down to the Oatlands Park Hotel on Benzon's coach, he himself acting as coachman, a somewhat dangerous experience. Most of his party, as far as I could make out, were what might have been called "Gentlemen Rooks." A large number of these gentry batted upon this young man. On one occasion they locked the door of the billiard room at Long's and kept him playing half the night, till he had lost ten thousand pounds.

"No, sir," said the porter at another sporting resort, answering an enquiry for "The Jubilee," "The heagles and the vultures are 'ere, but the carcase h'aint come yet."

The best friend the "Jubilee Juggins" ever had was the late Sir George Chetwynd, who did all he could to keep him straight. Had he listened to the latter he would not have done so badly on the Turf, but as Sir George often told me, Benzon, largely from vanity, was absolutely uncontrollable. A certain number of individuals made a regular practice of exploiting the unfortunate young man.

To Sir George Chetwynd's great honour, he continued to keep in touch with Benzon up to the end of the latter's miserable life, always maintaining that any faults he might have committed were the results of folly on the part of one who had been more sinned against than sinning.

During his last years "The Jubilee" did not suffer from poverty. He had been unable to get rid of five or six hundred a year which was tied up, and on this he managed to cut a certain figure among second-rate would-be sporting men who were glad to enjoy the society of one who in his day had attracted so much attention.

Though the two hundred and fifty thousand pounds squandered by Benzon created quite a sensation, other more unobtrusive spendthrifts have got through far larger amounts. But they concealed their losses instead of glorying in them.

An enormous sum must have been spent and lost by the generation to which Lord Hastings belonged. The latter occasionally hit the Ring very hard; when Lecturer won the Cesarewitch, for instance, he was a gainer of no less than seventy-five thousand pounds—and his Turf winnings in stakes were also considerable for two or three years. In 1864 they amounted

to ten thousand pounds, in 1866 to twelve thousand pounds, and in 1867 to over thirty thousand pounds. Hermit's Derby, however, in the same year, is said to have cost him one hundred and forty thousand pounds, and even had Marksman, who was second, won, he would have lost one hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

This spendthrift nobleman was anything but shrewd as a plunger. He had made his book so badly that, though he stood to lose heavily, he would only have profited to the extent of a few thousands had Vauban, which was his best horse, been first past the post. In 1868 the Marquis, a broken-down, ruined man, passed to his grave at the early age of twenty-six. Truly, as Arthur Roberts used to say at the Gaiety in the old days, "He who bets is a bettor, but he who doesn't bet is a damned sight better!"

Though plungers invariably lose their money, large fortunes have been accumulated by bookmakers, Turf commissioners, and other persons connected with racing. The late Mr. George Herring was an instance of this; his wealth, however, was to a great extent made after he had abandoned the Turf and gone into the City.

In the earlier part of his life Mr. Herring had been commissioner for the well-known Sir Joseph Hawley. He was a shrewd man and people recognised the stability of any enterprise with which he might be connected. Not as a financier, however, will his name be especially remembered, but rather as the very embodiment of cheery, genuine, and absolutely unlimited philanthropy.

One of Mr. Herring's characteristics was an old-fashioned cockney accent. "Come 'ungry," he would say when he asked a friend to dinner. Many, indeed, did come to him 'ungry, and of these few went empty away.

Many wealthy landowners and peers almost beggared themselves by racing in the "sixties" and "seventies." It was indeed remarkable what a number of the sporting contemporaries of the late King Edward started life as rich men and ended poor. It was not only losses on the Turf which ruined them, but their expenses were inordinately heavy. Keeping racehorses has always been a costly business, and an owner, even if he is fairly

lucky, is almost bound to be out of pocket at the end of the year.

The late Sir George Chetwynd once told me that he had kept a careful account of the money he had lost and won by betting—and on the whole he was a little to the good. Nevertheless at the end of his life he was anything but well off. It was the expenses of a racing stable and a luxurious establishment which had made inroads into his fortune. Racing men of necessity lead rather extravagant lives, and being accustomed to lose and win large sums do not pay attention to their daily expenditure, which gradually but surely reduces their fortunes.

The wealthy spendthrift, notorious for getting rid of his money, seems now to have become an extinct type. Such a one was Mr. Abington Baird, who, in spite of every sort of extravagance, left a very large sum of money—about a million. It has been computed that he only dissipated two-thirds of his fortune. Had he lived longer he would, no doubt, have got through every penny he possessed.

In his love of costly eccentricities and contempt for public opinion, Mr. Baird somewhat resembled another rich man of a preceding generation—"Mad Windham," of Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk, whose wild doings and reckless extravagance attracted a good deal of attention in the "sixties."

In the "eighties," a youthful nobleman who had just succeeded his careful and astute father got rid of almost as large a sum as Benzon on the Turf. Luckily for him, however, certain portions of his property, which he could not alienate, turned out so well that to-day he is again quite rich.

The vivacious young peer in question combined charming manners with an unlimited amount of assurance; it having been decided that he should second the Address, he went down to see Lord Salisbury at Hatfield.

"What was he like?" asked a friend after the visit was over.

"Oh! I found him very intelligent," was the reply.

Thirty years ago starting price betting, though it existed, was not nearly so widespread or popular as it is to-day.

At that time I sometimes went to a ground floor flat in Albemarle Street, where a retired artillery officer used to bet on the tape with his clients, a number of whom sat there a good part

of the afternoon on racing days in order to hear runners and results. As is always the case they generally lost, but if ever anyone did back a good winner the layer of odds, who had acquired a fine stock of language in his military days, was wont to indulge in such terrible imprecations that the successful punter felt quite ashamed of himself. This habit did not do the business any good, and after a time the artillery officer took to going over to France, where, before the days of the *Pari-Mutuel*, he made a usually successful book. Now and then he pulled off a coup, when, being a hospitable man, he would give an expensive dinner to all the Englishmen he knew.

It was a case of light come, light go with him, and he did not die a rich man.

The fascination which racing exercises over certain temperaments is extraordinary. Some time ago, having gone to look over a house, outside London, which a friend of mine thought of taking, the owner, an invalid clergyman, from an upper window pointed out the well-known racecourse which lay close by.

"When there's racing here," said he, "I have my chair wheeled to the bottom of the garden, so that I can get a good view of the horses as they go by. You will think it odd of me to say so, but, though I have never made a bet, I love the Turf. Goodness knows, I have little reason to do so! My father, who was a rich subaltern in a crack regiment of hussars, owned a lot of racehorses, and had it not been for them I should have occupied a very different position to-day. Racing cost him a fortune and his family were left practically penniless. Nevertheless, as I have said, it has a great attraction for me. I suppose it was seeing the racehorses when I was a child." Connected with the Turf was the smart moneylender who helped unlucky plungers to tide over Black Mondays. Though useful enough after a bad week, anyone who got into the clutches of such a man was almost certain to be ruined.

As a cynic said, he served you in the present tense, lent to you in the conditional mood, kept you in the subjunctive, and ruined you in the future. Meanwhile he gave excellent dinners to his more fashionable clients, and almost considered himself to be a gentleman.



Such a man called bills "securities," and, by adroit methods, generally contrived that not he but some humbler member of his profession should sue his victims.

A select few dealt only with the military. It is said that a certain discounter, on his death-bed, thanked heaven that although he had ruined half the Household Brigade, his conscience was clear of ever having done a bill for a Woolwich cadet. Another spoke with pity of a friend and rival, who, he said, had sunk so low as to be obliged to do bills at thirty per cent. for the Royal Marines.

After I had left Cambridge in the "eighties" I passed a good deal of time in Paris, concerning which city I agree with Montaigne, who said: "Paris possesses my heart since childhood; the more I have seen other beautiful towns the more the beauty of this one increases my affection."

The gay city, indeed, is apt to exercise an ever-growing fascination not only over Frenchmen but over people of all countries who have made any lengthy sojourn on the banks of the Seine.

Paris is almost all of it permeated by a feeling of gaiety and life—London merely by varying degrees of dullness. This, to a great extent, is produced by the modern English craze for restricting personal liberty. In the "eighties" Paris was characteristically French; the great cosmopolitan invasion had not then begun—jazz bands and palatial caravanserais were as yet unknown.

The modern public does not seem to care for quiet when taking its meals abroad. Instead of simply decorated rooms it likes huge structures decorated in the *neo-Hebraic* manner. One or two bands are also essential; the days are gone when people want to eat their dinner in peace.

When I first took to going to Paris, the *Café Anglais* still flourished, though possibly not so much as it had done in the past. It was in 1856 that it had been at the height of its popularity. It was then essentially the most aristocratic restaurant in Europe, and Ducléré, its chef, was called by Rossini "The Mozart of French cookery."

This restaurant, which closed its doors comparatively recently, was the last of the old-fashioned cafés to go.

Here, in the *cabinet particulier* known as "*le grand Seize*," Cora Pearl had once been served up naked on a silver platter.

To the end it remained an aristocratic resort, and several European notabilities, including King Edward, used to keep special bits of plate there. As for the Grand Dukes, some of them kept whole services which were stored in a carefully arranged closet known as *la Bibliothèque*.

Essentially Parisian were the old restaurants, such as the *Maison Dorée*, *Café Anglais* and *Café Riche*, all of which have now closed their doors. It might have been their boast that they attracted clients only by their excellent cuisine and ancient reputation, which was certainly well deserved.

At the *Maison Dorée*, when the proprietor, old Monsieur Verdier, was alive, one dined exceedingly well. Everything conduced to comfort and luxury. The white wallpaper, dotted over with little gold stars, the fine linen and glass, the well-polished plate all lit up by wax candles, imparted a peculiar air of distinction not to be found in modern resorts.

A number of tables were always reserved for gourmets, who used the place as a sort of club. At intervals Monsieur Verdier, in a frock coat and black skull-cap, would walk through the room exchanging a few words with old habitués.

The waiters were well-groomed, serious-looking men, whose advice as to a dinner was well worth taking. The wines were first class, a feature having been the *Champagne Rosée*—pink champagne—now, I believe, only to be obtained as a gift from famous wine-growers.

To this restaurant I had first gone as a Cambridge undergraduate in 1884, and many a pleasant dinner did I afterwards have in the old rooms, now converted either into a post office or a boot shop. Even in those days, of course, there were people who complained that the *Maison Dorée* was not what it had been. Such complaints are eternal.

Writing to Sir William Gregory in the fifties, Lord Dunkellin, who was a noted gourmet, said: "I only spent one night in Paris, and was painfully shocked at the deterioration of the *Trois Frères*. Nothing but Charles, the waiter, reminded me of old times."

From the *Maison Dorée* I once witnessed a terrible sight. A Cambridge friend of mine, who was fond of going to the opera, being luxurious, generally took a box to himself, declaring that sitting cooped up in the stalls spoilt his enjoyment. It should be added that he was always glad to welcome any friend who liked music, and, though personally I am not enthusiastic about operas, I went on more than one occasion.

On a certain evening when "Mignon" was to be played at the *Opéra Comique*, I agreed to join him in his box as usual. However, either all the boxes were taken or something prevented him from going, so I dined (in pleasant company) at the *Maison Dorée* instead, quite unaware that some good angel had arranged my evening. Sitting rather late over dinner, we were roused by a tremendous noise on the Boulevard outside, the cause of which noise we soon learnt was that the *Opéra Comique*, almost opposite, was on fire. In order to see what was happening we went out on the balcony upstairs, and there, sure enough, in front of us was a tremendous blaze. The street and roadway outside were crowded with people, a long chain of men passing buckets from hand to hand in order to increase the supply of water which the firemen were pouring on the flames. These *pompier*s in their brass helmets could be seen, like a lot of little toy figures, climbing about the roof of the burning building right up to the dome, which, becoming a glowing mass, eventually collapsed.

Everything was done to rescue the audience, but owing to the insufficient exits the loss of life was very great; as far as I remember, several hundred people were burnt to death. It was said in Paris at the time that among the many bodies found in the ruins of the corridors quite a number had been stabbed or wounded; the mob in its frenzy fought like tiger-cats to get out. For days afterwards, people declared that the Boulevard, near the site of the ruined building, smelt of burnt flesh, probably this was merely imagination, but I certainly remember thinking so myself when passing the ruins.

The great loss of life produced by this terrible conflagration stirred the Parisian authorities to take some action with a view to making the theatres and music-halls safer. All sorts of regulations came into force, and for a time were strictly applied.

To-day, however, things seem pretty much as bad as they were at the time of the fire, and I should say in the event of a panic anyone seated in the middle of the stalls would stand a very poor chance of escape.

I visited many strange cafés in those days, including the *Chat Noir*. During one of these visits I remember seeing "*l'Épopée*," a shadow play, the little figures representing Napoleon and *la Grande Armée*, having been designed by Caran d'Ache.

The famous Opera balls were still in full fling in the "eighties." The great staircase of the Opera House was, on such occasions, a wonderful sight, its steps filled with a motley crowd of gaily-dressed maskers. Besides the great orchestra in the interior of the house, there were two or three smaller ones in the *foyer* and elsewhere, all of which played with the greatest verve, while the music was always admirably chosen. At midnight, the scene on the floor of the auditorium during the quadrilles was the most animated and lively in the world. Though old Parisians lamented the decline of French gaiety, the dances often showed the utmost *abandon*, the splendid band playing so well that even the paid dancers were occasionally quite carried away with excitement. A peculiar feature of this band was the crash of drums with which certain tunes were punctuated.

As the music rang through the Opera House, even jaded onlookers not given to dancing found themselves beating time with their feet to the music. Innumerable pairs of legs—some of them very prettily-shaped legs—flew in the air, whilst old and young felt themselves filled with that peculiar feeling of careless and buoyant gaiety which Paris alone is able to impart.

The *quadrille excentrique*, known to the English as the *cancan*, was then still very popular. Certain celebrated dancers always attracted a crowd. The great majority of course were ladies. The only male dancer who had any real reputation was Valentin le Désossé, an entirely different type of man from the ordinary paid dancer of Parisian public halls. Those were the days of La Goulue, Grille d'Egout, Rayon d'Or, Nini Patte-en-l'Air and other high-kicking ladies; and Valentin, who, under the Empire, had danced for pleasure more than for pay at Mabilles and Valentino's with Clodoche and Flageolet,

was an agile partner for all of them. His sardonic expression and quaint appearance in an old-fashioned frock coat, top hat with a flat brim, and huge butterfly bow tie, a cigarette always between his lips, was highly characteristic. Nevertheless, there was something dignified about him, and his entrain and suppleness were marvellous ; lithe as a serpent, he twisted in and out in the quadrille, to which he always attracted an appreciative crowd.

With the advent of old age, Valentin le Désossé bade farewell to his beloved quadrilles and busied himself with the sale of wine ; he who had passed so many nights in a perpetual whirl went home every evening at six o'clock and ended his days as a staid old citizen in a quiet suburb near Paris.

It was during my sojourn in the gay city that the Boulangist movement began. As luck would have it, I frequently saw General Boulanger at the *Hotel du Louvre*, where, like myself, he was then staying.

Not bad looking, but with a head rather like a barber's block, he attracted a good deal of attention as a coming man and acquired luxurious habits such as he had never before known.

Every evening a smart little *coupé* used to wait for him in the courtyard and bear him away to the entertainments, where he was flattered into thinking himself the regenerator of France.

Though the leaders of the French Royalist party and a number of politicians believed in this good-looking soldier, the officials of the hotel, who knew his habits, were not enthusiastic about his future.

"Play away as much as you like," said an old Frenchman to me one New Year's day while we stood by a fanfare greeting *le brave Général* as he came down the steps of the hotel in full uniform ; "you won't make him into a great man."

The cynic was right. Boulanger was merely a wooden lath got up to look like steel, as was shown by his hurried flight when he anticipated arrest.

As is well known, Monsieur Constans, who was his principal opponent, contrived to have a document giving instructions for the general's immediate incarceration on a table where one of the latter's chief supporters would be sure to see it. Directly Boulanger learnt of the Government's decision to adopt drastic measures (which was a pure invention) he bolted to Brussels. Out of sight, out of mind, particularly applies to the French, and from that day his popularity waned.

Paulus, probably the finest artiste in his own line who ever trod the café concert stage, undoubtedly contributed in a great measure towards the general's popularity by his song, "*En revenant de la revue.*" I often heard him sing it, and occasionally the audience were quite carried away by his dash and go.

Another of this singer's military songs, "*Le père la Victoire,*" was superior to most of its kind. Something more than a mere café concert ditty, it expressed the military aspirations of the French, who always cherished the hope of recovering Alsace and Lorraine—the lost Provinces which are theirs to-day.

In his triumphant days, General Boulanger was indebted to the café concerts for a good deal of the popularity which eventually turned his head. When, for instance, he returned from Clermont Ferrant, Demay—that inimitable and never-to-be-forgotten songstress—following in the footsteps of Paulus, sang at the *Alcazar* :

*Mon p'tit Ernest est revenu  
Il s'occupe de la chose publique.*

It was not for nothing that M. Floquet had contemptuously dubbed Boulanger "*un St. Arnaud de café concert!*"

The general, I remember, lost no chance of keeping himself well before the public. He created quite a sensation by decreeing that soldiers might wear beards—had the sentry-boxes painted in red, white and blue stripes—ordered one particular setting of the *Marseillaise* to be adopted by military bands, and finally proposed to do away with the *gendarmes'* cocked hats which they had worn since Ramillies—but there public opinion was too strong

for him. Later on, however, under the Combes Ministry, General Andrée, a very unpopular Minister for War, succeeded in getting this done. He it was who also abolished the old style (still practised in the British Army) of presenting arms. Altogether Monsieur Combes and his merry men did everything they could to upset everybody, their great feat of course having been the expulsion of the Monastic Orders and the confiscation of their property, which was expected to yield a rich harvest.

In the end this spoliation produced but a very small sum, and the bulk of what it did produce was, I believe, embezzled by a high official who spent the money of the poor monks in unrestrained debauchery.

One of Boulanger's most bitter opponents was General de Gallifet, the brilliant *sabreur*, who afterwards himself became Minister for War. The latter, who was a friend of my mother's, never ceased to express his contempt for the man whom he denounced as a vulgar pretender. His letters to her at this time were full of scornful references to "*le brave général*."

Lord Lytton, I remember, had aroused General de Gallifet's indignation by having been civil to Boulanger. The truth was that the diplomatist in question made a point of being civil to everybody, which quality enhanced his popularity as Ambassador in Paris.

Since Lord Lytton's time none of our diplomats, with the exception of Sir Rennell Rodd, have seriously aspired to literary or poetic fame. The latter resembles Lord Lytton not only in being a poet but also in retaining much of the charm of manner which distinguished the diplomats of a more courtly age.

It is a curious and deplorable fact that a number of the new school, who have had to pass hard and difficult examinations, though undoubtedly of high mental capacity, so frequently lack the high bred courtesy and suavity of address which distinguished their predecessors of the past. The lack of these qualities in an official are apt to produce friction with foreigners—not long ago it indirectly cost the country a few millions.

The now well-known "Foreign Office manner" is of entirely modern growth, while diplomatists of the present day seem too

Sandringham  
1<sup>st</sup> Janvier  
1889



GENERAL DE GALLIFET





rarely possessed of those qualities which gained important diplomatic victories for predecessors who prided themselves upon being also polished men of the world. Possibly the very trying intellectual preparation required to pass a most difficult examination has a warping effect upon the human brain? A thorough knowledge of several languages is no doubt highly necessary for modern diplomacy, but some of the other subjects might well be dropped in cases where the competitor is by nature eminently fitted for a career so much bound up with a due understanding of human nature and a sympathetic manner of dealing with its many failings.

A great Victorian statesman once defined competitive examination as "a system for the bestowing of appointments not upon persons who were qualified for them, but upon those who had shown their fitness for something else." That such a definition is pretty near the truth is shown by the fact that no particularly brilliant figures have appeared since this modern panacea for inefficiency has been adopted. Whatever may be the merits of the examination system, it certainly tends towards the manufacture of prigs.

On the other hand, the old-fashioned practice of throwing open all sorts of well-paid posts to young men merely because they were of good family was quite indefensible. When such a state of things prevailed, it was only natural that a number of noblemen could, like Louis XIV, scarcely believe that they were made of common clay.

To return to my life in Paris—in the "eighties" I paid many visits to the racecourses in the vicinity of that beautiful city. Those were the days before the *Pari-Mutuel*, and bookmakers plied their trade without hindrance from the authorities.

A leading figure among them was old Mr. Gideon, who had been one of the chief supporters of Tom Sayers in his great fight. Others were Matthysens, who collected works of art, Captain Atkins, Wright, Moore, Saffery and Tommy Wilde. It was great fun going round the piquets, or little stands, on which the odds were chalked up. I am not at all sure, however, that the *Pari-Mutuel* is not more satisfactory for the general public.

Besides being anything but an astute votary of the Turf, I was, as a rule, extremely unlucky. The only good winner I ever backed in England was Gamecock, on which I had twenty-five pounds when it won the Grand National at twenty-five to one, while only once during a long experience of French racing have I pulled off anything like a good coup. This was over the Grand Hurdle Race of Paris, at Auteuil. Having chanced to meet a small bookmaker with whom I sometimes had a bet, I was lamenting to him how unlucky I always seemed to be.

"Well," said he, "as you've had a bad time I'll give you a tip which ought to do you a bit of good. As sure as I'm standing here Kersage will win the big race. And I'll tell you how I know I was in a bar in the *Rue Bergère* last night, and there I heard all about it. You can rely on me, it's the best thing you've ever come across."

"But," said I, "Kersage is a rank outsider—why it's scarcely mentioned in the betting!"

"And won't be," said the man; "that never stopped anything from winning."

Having, as I said, had a bad time, a little more or a little less didn't matter, so I backed the horse at odds something like thirty to one to win me one thousand eight hundred louis.

The first time round Kersage cut no figure at all in the race, and I was beginning to think that my friend had been talking nonsense when gradually the horse shot to the front. In the end it won easily by several lengths.

I was naturally delighted and full of gratitude to the tipster to whom this windfall was due. I could not find him that day, but took the earliest opportunity of thanking him and saying that I should be glad to make him a handsome present. At first he declared that he wanted nothing at all, but at last, after I had told him that this would make me feel uncomfortable, he said:

"Well, I'll tell you what you shall give me, which is the only thing I'll take, an order for a suit of clothes at your tailor's in London."

I need scarcely add that he received the best suit which money could buy.

When people talk of the rascality of the Turf and the blackguardism with which it is associated, I always think of this kindly man who, for no particular reason except good nature, gave me this excellent tip.

Before a big race at Longchamps and Auteuil, the night restaurants and bars frequented by the sporting world were always crammed with people who made a living out of racing. Not a few were more or less rum customers, not likely to stick at much if there was a chance of gain.

At one time when there was a good deal of sharp practice connected with the French Turf, a favourite method of impairing the chance of any dangerous English importation was to take his jockey round Paris the night before a big race and give him a good time. The result of this treatment generally led to defeat for anyone who had undergone it.

The twelfth Duke of Hamilton, who knew a great deal about French racing and the methods employed by those connected with it, having a horse running in the great steeplechase, brought over Jimmy Adams, a well-known English jockey, to ride it.

On the latter's arrival in Paris, the Duke gave him some advice as to the necessity of not being led into dissipation.

"That's all right!" replied little Jimmy, with a twinkle in his eye, "old devils like you and I, your Grace, know how to take care of ourselves—don't us?"

Jimmy certainly did, for he successfully steered the horse (I think it was Eau de Vie) first past the post at Auteuil.

Thirty years ago English people did not frequent Continental watering places as much as they do to-day. Le Touquet, Paris Plage, and several other popular modern resorts did not exist, and Boulogne was about the limit of the ordinary tourist's travels.

Trouville, however, had a certain reputation as an amusing place which it had retained from the days of the Second Empire, when the Duc de Morny had made its neighbour, Deauville, fashionable. The latter, however, had at that time sunk into a deserted, derelict condition, though some of its villas were tenanted by visitors who spent their time at Trouville.

I remember paying a visit to that expensive watering place in the late summer of 1887. Though gay enough, the place was

nothing like so luxurious or amusing as the modernized Deauville, which has now again completely eclipsed Trouville as a smart and luxurious resort.

There were a good many English at my hotel, among others the Marquis of Ailesbury and his wife, who were accompanied by a few sporting friends.

The Marquis, who had had to leave Eton because he had refused to be flogged, was a curious individual who, among other unedifying eccentricities, aspired to be taken for a cabman or 'bus driver. He dressed the part fairly well, always wearing a hat with a low crown similar to the headgear affected by Lord Scamperdale and Jack Spraggon, as pictured by Leech. His language was also realistic, but in the way of wit he lagged far behind the type which it was his ambition to copy. Nevertheless, the rough banter and repartee of the class he imitated flowed easily from his lips.

"I say, guv'nor, who feeds the pigs when you be driving?" he would shout out to any Jehu who incurred his displeasure as he threaded his way through the traffic.

His Turf career was unfortunate. Owing probably to the rascality of some of those who preyed upon him, it soon came to an end under circumstances which, had he not been absolutely indifferent to the opinion of decent people, should have covered him with confusion and shame. The most generous judgment which could be passed upon this misguided young man was that, combined with a naturally weak intellect, his careless upbringing ruined his life. He was a man born out of his class, and would have been happier had he not inherited wealth, with which he was hopelessly unfit to deal.

Besides having, as a too sharp sporting man, succeeded in getting himself warned off the Turf, he had contrived to land himself in serious financial difficulties.

His wife, formerly Miss Dolly Tester, of Brighton, had before marriage shown her attractive little face and figure upon the stage. Some said the marriage was a *mésalliance*, but in my opinion this nice little woman was much too good for her husband. At that time his affection seemed rather to have cooled, but a year or two before it had been very hot—like the soup which the Marquis had poured down the back of an enterprising



A SNAPSHOT AT DEAUVILLE

*P D Q. Co.*



admirer whom he thought too affectionate at a dinner-party given by Sam Lewis!

I could never discover how the foolish young nobleman managed to be so hard up that he had to rely upon an allowance from the above-mentioned financier?

At the hotel he and his wife lived comfortably, but not luxuriously, and as far as I could see they never indulged in high play at the Casino. Their bets at the races were small; indeed, the only real form of gambling in which his lordship seemed to indulge was throwing dice for drinks and small sums at the various bars which he and his associates were wont to frequent. The latter, though sporting men, were some of them scarcely sportsmen *sans peur et sans reproche*, while others, who were, had seen the seamy side of life—notably one who attained notoriety for having killed a boy at Brighton.

This, however, was by pure accident, not design. Strolling in the early morning on the pier, he had happened to come across a case of soda water bottles, which out of gaiety of heart he kicked into the sea. The case, as chance would have it, fell right on the top of a boy who was bathing in the water beneath and killed him. As far as I can recollect the “kicker” had to appear at the Assizes at Lewes, where, to his great disgust, he did not get off scot-free.

Another of Lord Ailesbury's suite was a young man who, though he had received a public school and University education, had acquired a fondness for the society of fighting men. He was very good with his fists himself, as later on I had reason to realize when I saw him knock down two stalwart chuckers-out at the old Globe Restaurant. The latter, not unnaturally annoyed at a chair being thrown at someone across the place, were attempting to eject him. Eventually, after flooring them both, he retired with the honours of war, and we adjourned to an underground gaming place full of bookmakers, prize-fighters, and every sort of rough character.

All this was in the course of an “evening out,” my sporting friend having undertaken to show me “real life in London.”

Lord Ailesbury, in spite of an assumed roughness of manner, could be civil enough when he chose; it was a pity, however, that his wife had not greater influence over him.



At that time the degenerate young man did not drink. I was told by his associates that he was constitutionally unable to consume much alcohol. This somewhat saddened the Marquis, who realized that it was a handicap in his struggle to ape the ways of the lower kind of sporting men. A few years later he would appear to have made a determined effort to overcome such a weakness, for I always heard that his death, which occurred not so very many years later, was accelerated by intemperance. He had had a very bad bringing up, having been allowed to run wild in the stables—something of an excuse for a stupid and thoroughly ineffectual life.

In due course I went on to Dieppe, the races at which place then attracted many people who had been to Trouville. Much the same amusements were provided there—baccarat, mild in those days compared with to-day, plenty of music and racing on the course outside the town.

At Dieppe that year I was very unsuccessful in my bets. Of course everyone who is not an idiot at heart realises that his chance of making money on the Turf is remote indeed. I am not, of course, speaking of bookmakers, but of the backers on whom they live.

Still, even though this be recognized, everyone is entitled to expect an occasional winner. This is just what I never got, horse after horse passing the post just far enough behind to lose me my money. Eventually, having contrived to get rid of a good deal more cash than was pleasant, I decided to retire.

Meanwhile I ceased to bet. The night before my departure, however, I had a most curious dream. Time after time I saw a steeplechase being run, the winner always being the same horse, the name of which, Fierté, was buzzing through my head when I awoke. I had, it should be realized, never heard of an animal with such a name, which seemed to me so curious that I determined to follow the matter up. Procuring a paper which contained the runners in races during the remainder of the meeting, among the entries for a big steeplechase to be run a day or two later, I found to my surprise a horse of exactly that name.

Before taking the afternoon boat I proceeded to make enquiries as to this animal's chances. A rank outsider I was told, and one

which had not the ghost of a chance. This did not look very promising ; nevertheless, the fact that I had dreamt the name of a horse, the existence of which had previously been unknown to me, seemed so strange that I felt I must have something on. Having lost so much, a little more could not matter, so I left a commission to back Fierté for twenty-five louis—at that time about twenty pounds. I went back to England and a couple of days later, after the race had been won, received a telegram with the names of the first three horses. Fierté having started at fifty to one, was second, beaten by a short head.

So much for dreams and presentiments.

Nevertheless, the whole thing was curious. Had this horse won, I should have firmly believed in the occult as an aid to successful racing ; as it is I am still not entirely devoid of certain superstitions, which from time immemorial have had influence with gamblers.

At the end of 1887, owing to my ill success on the French Turf and the inroads made upon my exchequer by the expenses of leading a more or less extravagant life in London and Paris, I began to realize that it was time to take a pull. Having returned to London and looked into my affairs, I concluded that it would be well for me to sober down and see something of the more serious phases of existence.

Though I had not taken full advantage of the educational facilities afforded by Eton and Cambridge, I had to some extent educated myself. Always an omniverous reader, I had a fair knowledge of a number of subjects, including French, which I had learnt in Paris pleasantly enough.

I went to see Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who had just been appointed Minister at Teheran, and proposed to accompany him. He agreed, and my mother being a friend of Lord Salisbury—then in office—got me appointed honorary attaché at the British Legation in the Persian capital.

I may add that this appointment cost the country nothing. I was not to receive any pay, and it was understood that the expenses of the journey should come out of my own pocket. Sir Henry, always most hospitable of men, said he should be delighted for me to reside with him in the Legation, where, in addition to my duties as attaché, I could act as his private

secretary and help him with his correspondence. This being arranged, I had the privilege of going with my mother to lunch with Lord Salisbury, in Arlington Street, after which, having received a letter confirming my appointment, I ordered a number of things which I should require at Tehran.

Meanwhile, I made the most of my time as far as amusing myself went. The Empire had just opened on a site previously occupied by a panorama of Balaklava, and the entertainment it provided was very much to my taste. I was there the second night and well remember the choral "Sports Ballet," which was very light and attractive. The old Empire programme and poster, representing a very vivacious dancing girl, was one of the best ever seen in London. I do not know why it was ever abandoned.

Early in 1888, having bidden farewell to London (pleasant enough as it was in those days) and my various friends, I started off for Paris, en route to join Sir Henry and his party at Marseilles. My leave-taking in Paris was arduous and exhausting in the extreme; what with one amusement and the other I got very little sleep, and at one time it seemed extremely likely that I should never catch the boat at all.

As a matter of fact I missed several trains, but eventually I did just succeed in reaching Marseilles in time to board the steamer which was to bear us on the first stage of our journey to Constantinople.

The last memory of Europe which I carried with me on my journey to distant Persia was the vision of a dainty little Parisienne sitting on a pile of luggage at my hotel, with a diplomatic cocked hat, which she had abstracted from its case, saucily perched upon her golden curls.

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## CHAPTER V



## CHAPTER V

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff.—His father.—Bradlaugh and the House of Commons.—Constantinople.—British Ambassadors and the Sultan.—A dinner at the Persian Embassy.—Doomed dogs.—Abdul Hamid and the Selamlık.—Journey to Batoum.—Through the Caucasus to Tiflis.—An energetic colonel.—A Mingrelian Prince's night out.—Caucasian hospitality.—An unfortunate mistake.—Arrival at Resht.—Setting out on horseback for Tehran.—Our escort.—The Kharzan Pass.—Casvin.—Drive to Tehran.—Our reception.—The British Legation.—Desert and gardens.—The Kadjar dynasty.—Cossacks and Russian officers.—The Persian army.—Its armament and tactics in the field.

THE party which embarked at Marseilles, in addition to myself, consisted of Sir Henry, \*Mr. Chauncy Cartwright, of the Foreign Office, Lady Wolff, a friend Miss Woollett, an English maid, a French valet, a huge wolf-hound, two King Charles spaniels of uncertain temper and habits, and an obese pug on which Sir Henry had bestowed the nickname of a high Egyptian official connected with irrigation, of whom, he said this dog was constantly putting him in mind.

Sir Henry had a considerable knowledge of the East, having in an official capacity passed some time in Egypt. Besides having been trained in diplomacy he was reputed to be clever and astute in dealing with Orientals, a knowledge of whose somewhat devious ways had certainly been possessed by his father, Dr. Joseph Wolff.

The latter, though now more or less forgotten, was with some reason considered to be an extraordinary character in his day.

Born at Weilersbach in 1795, the son of a rabbi, he became a Roman Catholic in 1812. A year later at Vienna he was on friendly terms with von Schlegel, Körner and the poet Werner. A great student and expert in Oriental languages, particularly in Arabic and Persian, he was in 1816 presented to the Pope,

\* Now Sir Chauncy Cartwright, K.C.M.G.

became a pupil of the *Collegio Romano* and *Collegio di Propaganda*, but having two years later publicly attacked the doctrine of infallibility and the teachings of his professors was expelled from Rome.

After a sojourn at a monastery near Fribourg he came over to London on a visit to Henry Drummond—a singular mixture of saint, wit and philosopher, as Carlyle said—and an enthusiastic supporter and one of the founders of the Irvingite Church.

Having declared himself a member of the Church of England, Wolff resumed his study of Oriental languages at Cambridge, and subsequently travelled as a missionary in Egypt and the Sinaitic Peninsular. He then visited Aleppo, Mesopotamia, Persia, Tiflis, and the Crimea, and returned to England as something of a social lion.

It was at this period that Dr. Wolff met my great-aunt, Lady Georgiana Walpole, who became his wife. The lady in question, though clever enough, was at that time a mature spinster of no great personal attractions.

According to one story, she happened, while sitting next to the missionary at a dinner party, to drop her fork. Dr. Wolff gallantly stooped to pick it up, and in the process of doing so pinched her leg. Having had little experience of that sort of thing, his enterprise made an impression upon her, and as she had a certain amount of money and was clever, Wolff, who had faced many dangers without quailing, determined to face another and proposed.

Having been accepted, he went to see the lady's brother, the third Earl of Orford, and after stating his intentions, said: "I may add that I come of the blood of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

"Oh!" said my grandfather, "you had better take her, but I fear our family can offer you nothing like that."

In 1828 Dr. Wolff again set out to look for the ten lost tribes. After further wanderings he reached Khorassan, was made a slave and rescued by the Persian Prince, Abbas Mirza. Quite undaunted he went on to Bokhara, which city (the writer was told when in Persia) he entered in a surplice and college cap riding on a mule and reading the English Church Service as he passed through the gate.

Bokhara at that time was intensely fanatical, no European's life being worth an hour's purchase, but Dr. Wolff's proceedings so astonished the Bokhariots that, concluding he was a madman, and therefore sacred, they left him in peace. In any case he got away safely to Cabul, and after great hardships, ill-usage, and privations reached Calcutta.

In 1836 he went to Abyssinia, and within the next two years was ordained deacon and priest during a visit to the United States. In 1833 he was made Rector of Linthwaite, in Yorkshire, and five years later made a second expedition to Bokhara to ascertain the fate of Lieut.-Col. Stoddart and Captain Connolly. After having run great dangers, he made a miraculous escape and returned to England with news of these officers' tragic fate. Seven years later he became Vicar of Isle Brewers, in Somerset, where he died in 1862.

Dr. Wolff published an original and somewhat extraordinary journal in which he habitually called a spade a spade. Referring to certain public men, he would mention their achievements and the high esteem in which they were held and append footnotes. "A sad liar," "Nonsense," or "This man is an ass," or sometimes "a d——d ass," and other trenchant comments of a similar kind.

In this diary he habitually spoke of himself in the third person, as, for instance, "The Lord said unto Wolff."

The original edition of the diary, while distinctly unconventional and occasionally libellous, is said to be of considerable interest.

Sir Henry, I believe, did not at all appreciate his father's outspoken methods. He was indeed supposed to have bought up for destruction all the copies he could. In any case the book is scarce. The author's other works, such as the journey to Bokhara, a most fascinating volume, are easily to be acquired.

While Dr. Wolff was sincerely religious (he described himself as "an enthusiast, drunk with the love of God"), there were cynics who maintained that at heart at least he had never ceased to be a Jew.

His brother-in-law, my uncle, Lord Orford, used to declare that Wolff wore phylacteries sewn into the ends of his trousers, and other stories of his Judaical leanings were rife.



He was also said to have contracted careless habits during his travels, which had made him lazy about changing his linen, with the result that a snowy expanse of shirt front rarely graced his breast. On one occasion, the story went, the Doctor, being about to start on a visit to a country house at which he was to be the lion of the party, his wife, who was not accompanying him, determined that this once at least he should do her honour. The visit was to last three days, and so carefully packing three spotless shirts in his bag, she bade him at their adieu take particular care to don one of these shirts regularly every evening. The three days passed and her husband returned.

"I hope you did as I told you!" said she.

"Of course I did, my dear," was the reply. "I put on a clean shirt every evening, one on the top of the other. I am wearing all four now!"

Though Sir Henry had every reason to be proud of his father, who was a clever and courageous man and one of the most distinguished travellers of his day, the subject was not one to which he was apt to allude. As a matter of fact I do not think the name of Wolff was very much to Sir Henry's taste. "Drummond," a name which had been given him as a compliment to his father's friend, he always used as a second surname, and he was always known as "Drummond Wolff," which certainly sounded better.

As a member of the celebrated Fourth Party he had achieved a certain amount of Parliamentary fame—one of the reasons which led to his being appointed Minister at Tehran.

Sir Henry may be said to have possessed excellent qualifications for such a post, having as a young man been in the Foreign Office and in diplomacy, as well as having acted as Commissioner for the Ionian Isles. Very active-minded and clever, no man was more prolific than he in devising schemes. Not a few of these were quite good. Unfortunately, however, he was rather apt to grow tired of them before they had matured, for he was of a somewhat impatient disposition.

Besides being a most good-natured and generous man, Sir Henry was a delightful companion. His powers as a *raconteur* were generally recognized; indeed, he was said to have been

the only person who had ever dared to tell Lord Salisbury an improper story.

Though notoriously Rabelaisian in his conversation, he had taken up a strong line in the House of Commons as to Bradlaugh, an ardent supporter of free thought, being allowed to take the oath.

Owing to his pertinacious opposition, the member for Northampton was put to enormous trouble and a good deal of expense before he succeeded in taking his seat. As a matter of fact Bradlaugh, very gifted and thoroughly sincere, possessed great ability, together with fine qualities which have since been fully recognized.

Sir Henry, though an admirable man, could not by any stretch of imagination have been called a very religious one. In addition to this he was an intimate friend of Henry Labouchere, "the Christian member for Northampton," as the latter once called himself, though cynics declared that his religious as well as his political convictions were in complete accord with those of his free-thinking colleague.

Sir Henry's action in the whole matter always seemed to me to have been dictated merely by his liking for Parliamentary tactics. I never heard him allude to this affair in after years; I fancy he did not remember the whole business with any particular satisfaction.

In ordinary life, in spite of a certain flippant cynicism, he was the kindest of men, rarely lost a chance of doing a good action and rarely spoke ill of anyone.

I always remember one of his pet theories which experience has taught me is true.

"People," said he, "when speaking of men who have attained high office, made large fortunes or been very successful in any walk of life, often say 'It is merely by pure luck that so stupid a man should have got to where he is.'"

"Believe me they are wrong. Nobody ever achieves conspicuous success in politics or in any profession without possessing some quality superior to that of his fellow creatures. It may not be the quality which is required for the position he holds, but it is always something which other competitors in the race of life have not got. Entirely foolish individuals never get on."

Sir Henry, besides having been in Egypt, had travelled a good deal in his youth. In Italy he had met Lady Wolff, a gentle, cultivated and artistic lady with a passion for pets, which she was gratifying by taking lapdogs to Persia.

Her honeymoon had been passed at Elba, where she had made a sketch of the great Emperor's gardener, Hollar, who at that time still survived. This, together with other illustrations, may be seen in "The Island Empire," an anonymous work written by Sir Henry, which contains some interesting particulars of Napoleon's briefer exile gleaned from persons who had been in daily contact with the Emperor and his miniature court.

The voyage to Constantinople on one of the old-fashioned boats of the *Messageries Maritimes* passed without incident.

Shortly after our arrival, I went with Sir Henry to the British Embassy to call upon Sir William White. The latter, one of the last of our diplomatic giants, was a big, bluff, good-humoured man with an extremely resonant voice. He had passed much of his life in Consular appointments in the East, of which he had an intimate knowledge. This, together with an instinctive insight into Oriental ways and a commanding presence, made him a really powerful Ambassador, the last of the fine old school of which Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had been such a shining example.

A strong personality is everything when dealing with Orientals, and Sir William enjoyed enormous prestige among the Turks and was able to cope with them, which was more than could be said for some of the English representatives who followed him.

One of these whose knowledge of the East had been gained entirely from books, having at last obtained an audience of Abdul Hamid, was craftily led away from discussing a pressing question by courteous enquiries as to a cold from which the Sultan said he heard the Ambassador had been suffering!

Flattered at the solicitude shown by the Commander of the Faithful, the British representative proceeded to detail some of his symptoms. The Sultan became more and more sympathetic and mentioned several remedies, among which he specially praised warm fresh milk, to supply which he said he would send a special kind of cow to the Embassy. The interpreter then

announced that the audience was ended, and before the Ambassador realised what had happened he found himself outside the Yildiz Kiosk!

Sir William White was made of different stuff, as was well realised by the Sultan, who with him attempted no tricks.

We all attended a big dinner at the British Embassy, and another given at the Persian Embassy in Stamboul by Moxim Khan, the Persian representative, who, though receiving no salary from his Shah, enjoyed a princely income from a tax paid him by the Persian porters and others, of whom there are an enormous number in Constantinople. Out of the large income drawn from his fellow countrymen, over whom he exercised great authority and power, this Ambassador had to pay his staff and all the expenses of the Embassy.

The present Persian Ambassador, it may be added, offended at not being accorded a position equal to that of the British and French representatives, having delegated his powers to another Persian, has retired in high dudgeon to Damascus.

After dinner Moxim Khan spoke to Sir Henry of Persia, which he declared was one of the most beautiful countries in the world and one which, thanks to its progressive ruler, was making tremendous strides upon the path of civilization. He praised the Shah as a most just and enlightened Monarch and lamented that he, Moxim, owing to his duties as Ambassador, was prevented from basking in the light of his countenance.

As a matter of fact the Persian Ambassador, like most of his countrymen enjoying lucrative posts abroad, took very good care not to return to his own country, where jealous courtiers would in all probability have intrigued against him with a view to getting his Embassy for one of themselves. The Persians are wonderfully clever talkers, and to listen to Moxim and his friends it might have been imagined that Persia was a heavenly Utopia, instead of, as we were pretty well aware, one of the most strangely governed countries in the world.

Before leaving Constantinople, where we stayed some days, I visited the Mosque of St. Sophia and other places of interest, including the Museum of the Janissaries, whose souls are supposed to be embodied in the birds which flit in flocks about the Bosphorus.

The streets abounded in dogs—those dogs which, in the years to come, were to be put into sacks and sold wholesale to a glove manufacturer, who had the poor brutes done to death on an island! An ancient prophecy foretold disaster for Turkey should these dogs ever be driven from Pera and Stamboul, and certainly their massacre brought the Turks no luck.

Before leaving I was fortunate enough to see the Selamlik, or ceremony of the Sultan Abdul Hamid going to mosque, which in those days was an interesting sight. At that time there was a sort of pavilion for privileged visitors near the gate of the Yildiz Kiosk, and we had a good view of the Sultan, who was driving in a pony carriage with Ghazi Osman Pasha, the victor of Plevna, by his side.

Immediately behind the carriage trotted, or rather shuffled, a crowd of ministers and high officials and pashas, some of them so fat that they could hardly keep up. The way from the Yildiz Kiosk to the mosque was lined by troops, for the most part Albanians of fine physique and appearance.

The uniforms were smart, and some cavalry which preceded the Sultan were very well turned out. The military who took part in this ceremony were all picked troops, the ordinary Turkish soldier being generally more or less in rags.

Some years later, in consequence of an attempted bomb outrage, the pavilion from which I had witnessed the Selamlik was pulled down, Abdul Hamid thinking it no longer a safe thing to allow any spectators.

From Constantinople we went by boat to Batoum, making one or two stops on the way.

In Turkey and the Levant there are a number of people with English names, who, owing to long residence in the East, have become in a great measure semi-Oriental. Members of such families having married an Armenian or Levantine wife often have children whose appearance assimilates to the type of the latter, though in some cases their offspring is British-looking enough.

The more wealthy of these Anglo-Orientals make a point of having their children educated in England, and also making visits there themselves. The less affluent, however, are sometimes unable to do this, and never set foot in Britain at all. Neverthe-

less, they profess the warmest admiration and affection for the country from which their ancestors came.

At a port on the Black Sea, Sir Henry and I went to pay a visit to the British Consulate, then in charge of an official with an essentially English name, but of purely Levantine appearance.

The semi-military servant who ushered us in was, I observed, dressed in a poor sort of makeshift European uniform. In the course of conversation I mentioned this to the host, and asked him why he had not put the man into the picturesque costume of the district.

"Well," said he, "I admit it would be prettier, but, as a matter of fact, I like to see someone about in a dress reminding one of home."

"Home" was England, which he had never seen!

On our arrival at Batoum we were greeted by half a battalion of Russian infantry—a guard of honour in shabby, threadbare uniforms of dark green. Their colonel and officers, who on the other hand were admirably turned out and wore brilliant gold epaulettes, gave our party a courteous welcome, presented the ladies with beautiful bouquets, and made themselves as useful and agreeable as it was possible to be.

After a very short stay, during which I went round the dismal town and had a look at the fortifications which Russia has bound herself by treaty to demolish and was now strengthening, I joined our party at the station where we were to take the train for Tiflis. More tattered soldiers, gorgeous officers, complimentary speeches and bouquets, and we were *en route* in a very comfortable train de luxe for the capital of the Caucasus, which we reached in due course.

The food on the way was excellent; indeed, even at the small railway stations in the Caucasus one could then obtain well-cooked and luxurious meals.

Standing on the platform of the railway carriage at Tiflis, a man came up to me and asked: "Are you English?" I replied in the affirmative, upon which he said: "Then perhaps you will let me shake hands."

"I'm an English engineer," said he, "who has been in this blasted place for several months without a single British soul to talk to. You don't know what good it has done me to meet one

at last." I gave this true patriot a hearty handshake and wished him good luck in his undertakings, which hitherto he told me had not been going too well.

At Tiflis we stayed at the Oriental Hotel, a well-known and excellent hostelry, very popular with Russian officers.

At the end of the dining-room was a sort of bar, not devoted merely to drinks but also to the supply of the various attractive and succulent little dishes, caviare, anchovies and various Russian specialities known as *Zakouska*.

The proper time to indulge in this is before a meal. When washed down by *vodka* it is supposed to promote an appetite.

The cooking at the hotel was excellent, a bird called *Wald-schnapps*, a sort of woodcock, being especially good.

Aides-de-camp of the Governor and other officials soon began to call. The majority spoke perfect English and were most agreeable companions.

Two of our countrymen were staying in the hotel, a pleasant young fellow travelling on business to Baku and a missionary, Dr. Lansdell, I think his name was, a divine, I fancy, better known for his explorations in the Caucasus than for having induced Georgians or Circassians to join his particular fold.

He was a grave and serious-looking man, and as it seemed likely that he would try to organize services for our party or take us off to inspect missions, I took care to give him rather a wide berth, the more so as he openly expressed his disapproval of smoking.

The person most interested in this missionary was an English colonel who had joined us on our journey from Constantinople, and was proceeding to a Consulate in Persia, to which he had just been appointed. Possessing a good knowledge of the Persian language, this colonel, who was very evangelical and looked like a Methodist minister, was of most bellicose tendencies, as far as Russia was concerned. He regarded a contest with that power as inevitable, and was always working up information concerning its fighting forces, so that, as he said, England might be ready when the day of battle should arrive.

Whilst in Tiflis, for instance, I accompanied him on a tour of all the toyshops we could find, the object being to buy tin

soldiers, an inspection of which he hoped might reveal any new regiments recently added to the frontier forces of the Russian Army.

I was rather inclined to regard this expedition as a joke, but the colonel impressed upon me the intense seriousness of our quest, and gave me particular instructions not to mention his name, for, said he, "The Russians know me; indeed, I flatter myself they hate me more than any other Englishman alive."

This may or may not have been the case—anyhow this officer had done excellent service, mapping out remote parts of Persia, where he had passed a considerable period of time.

During the Russian expedition against the \*Tekke Turkomans in 1881, the colonel, having thrown his European clothes into a well, had assumed the dress of an Armenian horse dealer, in which capacity he had been able to penetrate into General Skobelev's camp, where, he declared, he had acquired a good deal of information of a valuable description. The Russians, he boasted, had never had the slightest idea of his identity, and he gloried in having taken them in. It was admittedly a very adventurous thing to do; nevertheless certain cynical individuals said "that Skobelev had known the truth all the time, and had paid no attention to the colonel merely because he regarded him as a harmless lunatic. The whole thing had much amused the Russians, and the idea that any Englishman should be able to deceive him had made their General roar with laughter."

It used to be a favourite "draw" in Tehran to get the colonel to tell the story of this adventure, and then enquire why he chose to impersonate a horse dealer, when it was notorious that horses were the one thing in which Armenians never dealt? The colonel, who was good natured, took it all in excellent part.

At Tiflis there was then still a good deal to remind one of the old days, before Russia had subdued Schamyl and obtained a real domination over the Caucasus.

At a dinner party I sat next the old chieftain's granddaughter, the charming and refined wife of a Russian officer. It was curious to reflect that under other circumstances she would have led a

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\* See page 155.



secluded existence in some mountain fastness, amid the Oriental surroundings in which Georgian and Mingrelian women formerly lived.

Well educated and with delightful manners, this lady showed not the slightest trace of being descended from the rough old chieftain who for so long kept the Russians in check.

Some of the Caucasian nobility still retained unconventional ways. One night, some time after I had gone to bed, I heard the clatter of horses' hoofs outside the hotel, followed by the noise of men dismounting and their steeds being led away.

It was a Mingrelian Prince who, with a number of his followers, had ridden into Tiflis from his country retreat outside.

Having woken up the hotel and called for supper, he discovered that an itinerant theatrical company were staying in the house.

He at once had the prima donna and the rest of the troupe aroused from their slumbers, and proceeded to make them give a performance, there and then, in the coffee room of the hotel. Everything went off admirably, much champagne was consumed and the prince and his retinue cantered away in the early morning after having generously rewarded the players, who had no reason to regret the loss of their night's rest.

With Sir Henry I attended many dinner parties; indeed, during our fortnight's stay we scarcely ever dined in the hotel.

There was always a native band, attired in Georgian dress, in the passage outside the dining-room or in the dining-room itself, and their playing, half European and half Oriental, was anything but disagreeable. There was a great deal of glass clinking and of toast drinking, and not infrequently there would be a dance afterwards, in which characteristic Georgian dances, accompanied by much hand clapping, invariably formed part of the programme.

A picturesque feature in Tiflis was the Georgian costume which was worn by civilians as well as Cossacks.

The long skirt, ornamented belt and sword, high boots, fur cap, and silver or gold-tipped cartridge cases produced a very decorative effect. The latter, worn on the breast, though originally intended to contain a charge of powder and shot, had long ceased to hold anything more deadly than cigarettes.

The bazaars at Tiflis, which had retained their Oriental character, were of considerable interest. Most of the traders there were Persians or Armenians. Other portions of the town were purely European in character. On the heights above stood the remains of the old castle, where the Shahs' Viceroy had once held their sway.

There did not appear to be much in the way of public amusements, though I was told that there existed places where dancing could be seen. The young Englishman, of whom I have spoken as staying at our hotel, suggested to me that we should have an evening round the town, and having obtained some information from a Russian officer, we had an excellent dinner, and at about ten-thirty set out to see Caucasian night-life.

One place in particular we were told was most amusing, and there we bade our *dyosky* driver wend his way. We drove and drove, and eventually pulled up at a biggish house. There were no lights in the windows, and the place looked somewhat chilly and unattractive.

"I suspect they keep pretty quiet," said my friend; "the Russians are funny people—besides I believe it's their Lent; anyhow have a go at the bell."

I rang and rang without getting any response, till at last, after a great rattling of bolts and bars, the door opened and an old lady in a dressing-gown appeared.

"She looks rather austere," said my companion, "but I see there are plenty of girls about the place," and sure enough the dimly lit staircase at the back of the hall was filled with a bevy of young ladies in semi-deshabille, their hair for the most part streaming down their backs.

"Well, here goes," said I, and proceeded to tell the old lady in French that we had been directed to her house, where we understood we could see dancing and have some fun!

Though but imperfectly comprehending my words, she understood enough to make her fly into a passion, and proceeded to let me know that she considered us desperadoes of the very worst kind. Supported by sympathetic and half-frightened murmurings from the maidens grouped upon the stairs, she enquired what sort of young men could such visitors be—knocking respectable people up at unearthly hours, merely to

insult them? If we advanced a step further into the house she would scream for the police. Altogether she was in a most agitated and angry condition, so thinking it best to be off we jumped into the *drosky* and told the driver to make for our hotel.

It was to a girls' school the Russian officer had sent us, whether intentionally or by mistake I did not discover, for I was never able to get hold of him again.

This damped our desire to inspect the Georgian underworld, and henceforth we were more careful about exploring the Tiflis pleasure resorts.

After a fortnight's stay our party started for Baku—then already beginning to be identified with "oil"—which town we reached after a train journey of some interest, for from the windows could occasionally be seen long lines of camels, led by men in huge fur caps, wending their way over interminable plains.

At Baku our party embarked on a small steamer which, after touching at one or two Caspian ports, landed us at Enzeli, where a number of Persian officers and officials were waiting to greet Sir Henry.

Thence we proceeded to Resht, which is not far away, and passed a couple of days in the Governor's house, the most striking feature of which was its superb carpets. According to the Persian custom of those days, trays containing sweetmeats and sugar were sent for the newly arrived Minister, who compensated those who brought them as he was expected to do.

Meanwhile, our caravan, for it was little less, was being got together by Mr. Sidney Churchill, who had come down from the Legation at Tehran, together with a Persian of high rank, specially chosen by the Shah to supervise the arrangements for our comfort. This official had made a sojourn in Europe, where he had acquired a partiality for alcohol and European dress. Otherwise he remained a true Persian. Extremely polite and extremely lazy, I do not fancy that he did anything beyond giving Mr. Churchill *carte blanche* to requisition any horses or mules necessary for the journey.

In those days, as there was only a bridle track from Resht to Casvin, everyone had to be carried in *tachtaravans* or ride

as far as that city. The rest of the journey to Theran was performed in carriages, a number of which we knew were held ready for our party.

Sir Henry, after some discussion, decided to ride a mule. Mr. Chauncy Cartwright, Mr. Churchill and I rode horses, the animal allotted to me being a fine little chestnut. Lady Wolff, and the lady with her, travelled in *tachtaravans* or *palanquins* slung on poles between two mules. A multitude of servants and camp-followers bestrode all sorts of steeds, while a squadron of irregular cavalry acted as a guard. The latter, who belonged to one of the more warlike tribes, were dressed in blue Persian coats, wore huge fur caps, and carried Winchester rifles on their backs.

To every rifle a forked rest had been affixed. Altogether, what with their captain, who carried a curved sabre as well as dagger, and their ensign, with a silver mace in lieu of a flag, the escort presented a highly picturesque appearance.

Every day a number of men started in advance, so that at midday we always found a tent with a luxurious lunch ready for our arrival. Every night we slept in a regular camp, over which the *sowars* of our escort kept guard.

Up to the time that we reached the foot of the Kharzan Pass everything went well. There, however, we met an excited Belgian on his way from Tehran, full of the terrors of the pass and the dangers which awaited every traveller who attempted to cross it. Lady Wolff was nearly thrown into hysterics, and Sir Henry, seriously perturbed, summoned a sort of council to enquire into the question of going round some other way.

In vain Mr. Churchill, who had an intimate knowledge of the route, declared that the Belgian's alarmist reports were merely the result of a lively imagination, combined with an undue fondness for the bottle! For quite a long time Sir Henry declared that nothing should induce him to move.

Nevertheless, after a night passed in a camp surrounded by howling jackals and other disquieting animals, he eventually thought better of it, and the next morning found our caravan moving up the mountain to the pass, the irregular horsemen making a gallant appearance by scouting in every direction which the nature of the ground would allow.

In due course we reached the summit, which certainly presented an alarming prospect to anyone only accustomed to Bond Street. The path along which we had to go was very narrow, while on one side lay a deep ravine, in which could be clearly seen the skeletons of horses and mules which had at various times been precipitated over the edge.

Sir Henry, who could not bear great heights, became very agitated as we neared the top. Nevertheless, with the captain of the irregular cavalry riding on the outside he eventually got over safely, and as once we were clear of the pass everything was plain sailing till we reached Casvin, he soon regained his habitual calm.

Outside the town of Casvin we were met by the Governor with his retinue and an escort of cavalry. Several mace-bearers were among his party, and one or two horsemen also carried the bucklers or round shields which had even at that time become obsolete. This was the only occasion on which I saw these ancient military relics in actual use.

At Casvin, where we lodged in a comfortable enough palace, we remained several days, after which, in several old-fashioned carriages, we set out for the drive to Tehran.

A mile or so outside the walls of the town we stopped and pitched our tents, in which we slept that night, previous to the official reception and entry which were to take place the next morning.

Shortly after sunrise I and Mr. Chauncy Cartwright, with whom I shared a tent, began looking out our uniforms with a view to taking part in the ceremonies of the day.

To my horror I found myself obliged to wear the boots I had driven in, which was awkward, they being brown. As, however, owing to his age and infirmities, Sir Henry had been dispensed from riding into the city at the head of his staff (broken down-looking old victorias being provided by the Shah for our official entry), their colour, I reflected, was unlikely to be seen.

Except that an Englishman, fond of sporting his volunteer uniform, was kicked off his horse in full view of the Persian army, everything went off according to plan. Native bands played "God Save the Queen" in front of long lines of ragged Persian

soldiers, quite a number of whom had been entrusted with modern rifles for the occasion.

The newly arrived Minister and some high Persian officials then exchanged compliments in a large and ornate tent. After this we all got into the carriages, Sir Henry in the leading victoria with mace-bearers, cavalry and *gholams* cantering by its side. In this order we passed through a number of squalid streets till we reached what used to be known as the Boulevard des Ambassadeurs, out of which we turned into the British Legation.

Lady Wolff, who had arrived a day or two before, scattered flowers on Sir Henry's head from the top of the gate-house as his victoria passed through it. Then came more receptions, more compliments and at last a peaceful dinner.

Unlike the other secretaries, who lived in little houses within the grounds, I was given a room in the Legation itself, and here, though it took me a little time to become accustomed to the raucous cries of the peacocks which roosted on the roof, I was not uncomfortable.

To-day, I understand, peacocks are no longer to be seen at the British Legation, but in those days it was one of our special privileges to harbour a royal bird, which only those having special permission from the Shah himself were allowed to possess.

There were then several picturesque features connected with the British Legation. The *gholams* (native or Indian couriers who carried the bags of despatches to the coast and accompanied members of the Legation on journeys, besides acting as a sort of guard), wore handsome gold-braided blue Persian coats and lambskin caps, while on state occasions their chief, the Mira Khor, or master of the horse, and two or three others were dressed in ornamental shawls and carried silver maces, producing a very artistic effect.

The Legation also possessed a state *kalian* or waterpipe which, besides being produced for the delectation of Persian visitors of distinction, was occasionally handed round after big dinners.

The Legation building, erected by men of the Royal Engineers not so very many years before on what had been part of an arid plain, was a curious-looking erection in the South Kensington Museum style.

Wherever there is water in Persia trees grow and shrubs flourish with extraordinary luxuriance, and the grounds with their shady walks and watercourses seemed delightfully restful after our long journey.

The Legation had summer quarters outside Tehran at Gula-Hek, as the French had at Teghrish and the Russians at Zergendeh. At Gula-Hek the staff lived in little houses; my quarters, however, were in the main building with Sir Henry. All of us lunched and dined in a large tent cooled by blocks of ice. Altogether life out there was very pleasant, the grounds being full of trees and verdure, the result of careful irrigation, an art in which the native gardeners (mainly *guebres* or fire-shippers) are very expert.

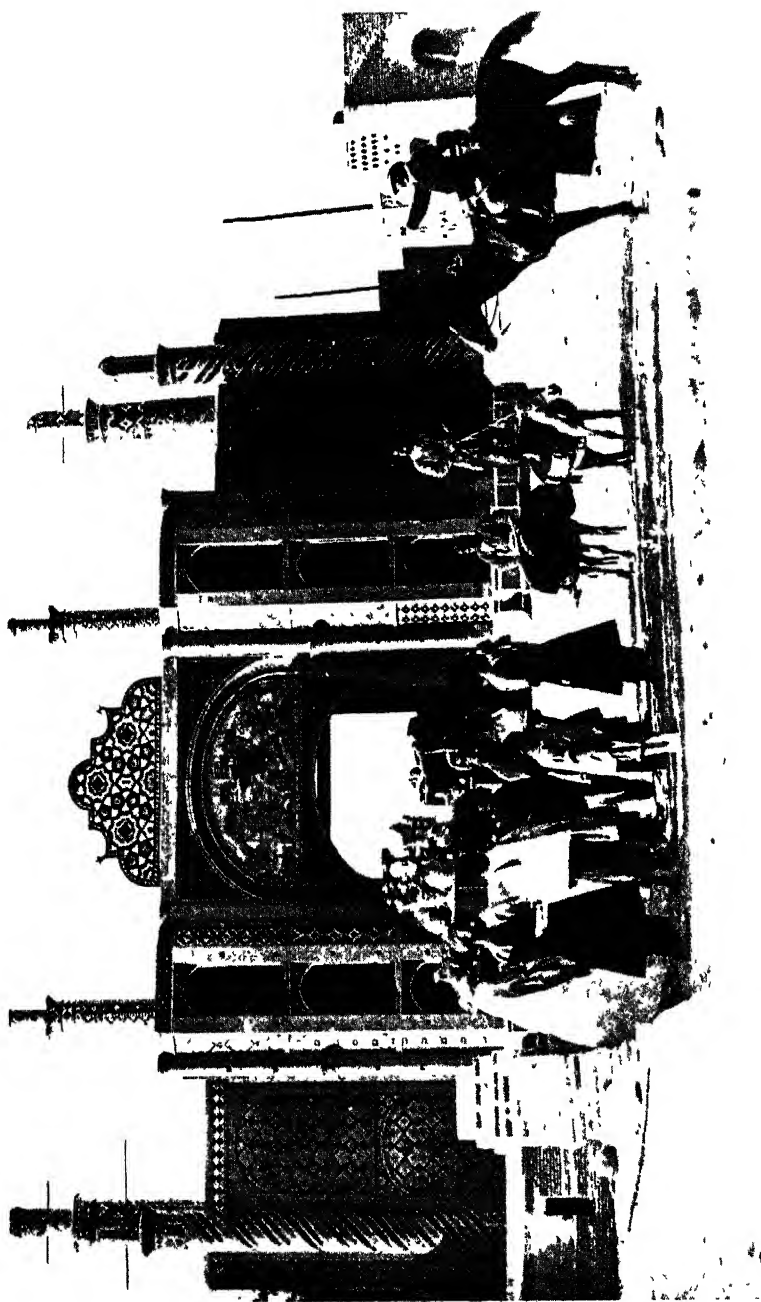
In Persia, indeed, the most arid-looking bit of desert seemed only to need water in order to blossom like the rose.

The system of little watercourses, so devised as to enable the gardener to divert them at will, was exceedingly charming.

It is delightful to listen to the sound of running water in a rose garden, an amenity highly appreciated by the Persians, who in summer sit for hours smoking their *kaliens* while one of the party recites Hafiz, Sadi or some other poet. The little watercourses were often lined with brightly coloured tiles, and most Persian gardens of any size contained one or two large ornamental tanks of water, on the surface of which rose leaves were sometimes scattered to form words of welcome to a distinguished guest. This ancient and pretty custom required a very still day for its complete success.

Sir Henry spent the next few days in being initiated into the intricacies of Persian policy by Sir Arthur Nicholson—now Lord Carnock—who had been *Chargé d’Affaires* up to the time of our arrival. He, his children and charming wife, a sister of Lady Dufferin, shortly afterwards left for England.

Tehran, though declared the capital during the closing years of the eighteenth century, remained an insignificant town till the reign of Nasr-ed-Din. The latter, probably in imitation of the fortified enceinte of Paris, threw up a mound and excavated a ditch, which extends in a circle for more than eleven miles round the city. At intervals are a number of ornate gates ornamented with tilework, some of which represent mythical Persian



THE DOULET GATE, TEHRAN





heroes and their exploits. Beyond gratifying what must have been merely the Shah's whim, the defences of Tehran could never have served any useful purpose.

The reason which, some ninety years before, had caused the Persian ruler of that day to transfer the seat of government from Ispahan would appear to have been the fact that its main strength, as well as the menace of Russian aggression, both lay in the north.

Tehran lies at a height of about four thousand feet, some nine miles away from the foot of the Elburz range of mountains, which, thirteen thousand feet high and crossed only by a few difficult passes, protect the city alike from the northern blast and northern aggression.

In former days the Shahs had often made a good fight against the predatory designs of Russia, owing to the warlike qualities of tribesmen drawn from the Perso-Turkish frontier.

The present ruling Dynasty of Persia was itself derived from one of these tribes, the Shahs for the last hundred and thirty years having been Kadjars, a warlike clan which in ancient days was told off to defend the Perso-Turkish frontier.

About the first time these tribesmen appear to have come to the front was during the siege of Ispahan by the Afghans in 1724. The Persians being hard pressed, five hundred Kadjar horsemen, acting as a guard for Prince Tamasp, the heir apparent, contrived to get him through the enemy's lines in safety.

The Persian army in the "eighties," with the exception of the Cossacks, who were drilled and commanded by Russian officers, could not have been called a serious fighting force. To begin with, the vast majority of their rifles were of an obsolete pattern, generally rusty and not infrequently out of order.

The old Shah, I believe, had a good store of comparatively modern rifles stacked away in the Palace or Ark, but being of opinion that it would be a pity to entrust such beautiful new firearms to the tender mercies of a careless soldiery, took good care not to have these rifles served out. The Cossacks, however, were fairly well armed, as was the mounted royal bodyguard, a well-equipped body of horsemen with silver belts and Winchester rifles, which, in red flannel cases, they wore slung on their backs.

*Esprit de corps* was not a strong point in the army of the King of Kings, which, more or less inefficient, was better on parade than when facing a foe.

A younger son of the Shah, the Naib es Sultaneh, was Commander-in-Chief. Beyond taking the emoluments attached to the post, he did not devote much time to his troops, the latter, wretchedly equipped and seldom paid, being difficult to get together. In addition to this, their rifles were mostly of a very antique pattern and often devoid of locks. Comparatively new rifles, from the Shah's own reserve, were occasionally served out for an important review, care, however, being taken that they were returned to store at the end of the day. It was on one of these stirring occasions, when the soldiers had been given three rounds of blank ammunition to fire a salute, that the Naib es Sultaneh declared his intention of riding in front of the ranks.

"*Quel courage, mon Prince,*" said Count Monteforte, who was in attendance as one of the gallant Commander-in-Chief's staff.

The spirit animating all ranks remained much the same as that described in the days of Hajji Baba.

"If there were no dying in the case, Allah ! how the Persians would fight !"

Within the last thirty-five years the fighting methods of Persian military commanders seem to have undergone no change. A body of troops who were being trained to proceed to the Russian frontier, becoming terrorized by a handful of brigands, sought to exculpate themselves by pleading that the Russians were so far and the brigands so near, while an officer who had retreated precipitately made the excuse that no troops could be expected to stand artillery fire.

The Persian Cossacks were far smarter than the rest of the army. The regiment in question came into existence in 1879, being raised as a sort of special bodyguard to the Shah.

In 1888, when I was in Persia, the strength of the force did not, I should say, exceed a thousand. Since then, however, there has been a great increase in its numbers. I believe that to-day there are more than fifteen thousand men in the Cossack Brigade.

In my day and up to 1920 all the higher officers were Russians. In November of that year, however, the Russian personnel were

dismissed on the demand of the local British representatives, the Cossack Division having demonstrated its capacity to execute—not for the first time—a long-distance retreat in record-breaking time.

The above criticisms, it should be understood, apply merely to the so-called regular army. As has already been said, there were good fighters among the irregular cavalry and the tribesmen in various districts remote from the capital.

In the earlier part of the nineteenth century Persian troops, under the gallant Abbas Mirza, did not acquit themselves badly in the struggle against Russia, and during the Great War the South Persian Rifles, commanded by British officers, while dealing efficiently with disorder showed how well properly trained and led native soldiery could do.



## CHAPTER VI



## CHAPTER VI

Foreign military instructors.—The Shah's palace and grounds.—Fath Ali Shah and his offspring.—The Peacock Throne.—Jewels.—Ancient usages.—"Bast."—Reception of the British Minister and his staff by Nasr-ed-Din.—How Persia was governed.—Polygamy in theory and practice.—Royal wives a commercial asset.—Entertainers.—Eunuchs.—Signing a concession.—The Shah as a ruler.—"Baabism."—Some distinguished members of our Legation.—Sir Henry's hospitality.—A fancy dress ball.—European residents in Tehran.—Prince Dolgorouki.—Our colleagues.—The Comte de Monteforte.—Persian servants and their methods.—Ali.—Objection of Persians to personal violence.

THERE were a good many Russians and Austrians in the Persian service who, when guests at the British Legation, never failed to do justice to the excellent champagne which our generous Minister had imported from Europe. The wine in question flowed freely; so good-natured was Sir Henry that guests could have it whenever they liked. Nevertheless, there was not the slightest intemperance among the English. With the Russians it was another thing altogether; the Cossack officers became very strange and excited at times.

The Persian army, under the old Shah, Nasr-ed-Din, had been subjected to all sorts of foreign missions—Austrian, French and Italian among the number. Each mission in turn had left behind one or two of its members who remained living in Tehran as pensioned officers. Among these was General Geisler, an Austrian, a great expert at Bridge, which was played in Persia in 1888, long before it had been ever heard of in London.

Another was General Andreini, a retired Italian soldier. This good-humoured, portly old gentleman, who always wore a wonderful uniform, led a pleasant enough life with his wife and nice little daughter, Bibella.

Shortly after his arrival at the Legation, Sir Henry, according to immemorial usage, received from the Shah a white stallion,



with its tail dyed pink, out of the royal stables. The animal in question wore a golden halter, that is to say, a halter ornamented with gold.

In return, Sir Henry sent the Shah a gold cigar case, which, as we afterwards heard, the King of Kings at once had valued in the Bazaars, where its worth was estimated at eighty pounds. Considering that Sir Henry had paid a hundred for it in London, this was not so bad. However, we were given to understand that the Shah thought he might have received something better.

The palace of the Shah at Tehran, known as the Ark, though not of ancient date, was quite interesting and picturesque. A view of the exterior did not reveal any striking or beautiful features, but within the gates the walls were bright with tiles, mainly painted with legendary heroes of Persian history or life-sized soldiers on parade.

Conspicuous in many of these quaint and highly decorative compositions was a young officer whose whole appearance approximated to the European rather than to the native type. This, I believe, was intended to represent a young man named Stacy or Stacey, a member of the staff which accompanied Sir John Malcolm on his visit to Persia in 1810. The good looks and gallant bearing of this young officer, it is said, made such an impression upon the Persians that as a type of manly beauty he figures on numberless *kalumdans* (pen cases), boxes, wall decorations and other forms of native pictorial art.

The grounds of the palace were agreeably laid out, the Persians having a sort of instinctive knowledge of how to combine trees, shrubs and water so as to form an agreeable and peaceful retreat. Here and there were large tanks, one of which, facing the pavilion, in which the Shah used to hold his court at *No Rooz* (Persian New Year's day), had bundles of rods floating on its surface—a blunt reminder that there were plenty of rods in pickle for unruly subjects.

On the occasion of such audiences, the King of Kings would smoke the *kahian* of state seated on his throne, and the Court poet recite verses of praise. The whole scene, with the master of ceremonies and courtiers dressed in shawl robes and shawlswathed *kolas* or caps, was picturesque in the extreme.

In the portion of the grounds reserved for the Royal wives, there used to be a marble slide terminating in a tank of water, two or three feet deep. The slide in question had been constructed for the delectation of Fath Ali Shah, one of Nasr-ed-Din's predecessors, whose reign began at the end of the eighteenth century. This Shah had an enormous quantity of wives and over three hundred children, consequently some of his descendants occupied very humble positions in life.

On fine summer days, having ordered out a certain number of his wives, the monarch in question having made them sit down at the top of the slide, each in turn would receive a push, with the result that after a swift descent she landed with a huge splash in the water beneath.

This spectacle is said to have vastly amused the old Shah, while the ladies, who were generally well compensated for their wetting, did not raise any objections.

The interior of the palace, though some of the rooms were prettily decorated in the Persian fashion, had nothing particularly striking about it.

The great Audience Hall, where the old Shah used to receive the *Corps Diplomatique*, besides valuable jewels, contained some very fine specimens of old Persian armour, worn some hundred years before by the cavalry, with which Abbas Mirza had tried to stem the torrent of invading Russians.

There were a number of very moderate pictures in the palace. These, Nasr-ed-Din had picked up during his first visit to Europe in 1872. Among them was the picture of a donkey, which the old Shah had had copied by a Persian artist. Copy and original hung side by side, and the Persians declared that it was impossible to discover which was which.

There were also a great number of mechanical toys. These, for the most part broken, had been purchased in Paris and St. Petersburg. There was a throne in the Audience Hall, near which lay a bolster heavily embroidered with pearls, but the famous Peacock Throne, brought from Delhi by Nadir Shah in the eighteenth century, stood in another apartment, which also contained upright glass cylinders full of uncut jewels. The latter, together with the globe on which the countries of the world were marked in precious stones, and several cases full of

pearls and gems were under the special charge of a Prince attached to the Royal Household, who received the Persian equivalent of about two thousand pounds a year for seeing that there was no pilfering. In spite of this, it was said a handful of precious stones was occasionally secured by enterprising people who knew when the custodian's back was likely to be turned.

Much in the palace was regulated by ancient usage, some of which in all probability had been handed down from the days when the Sefavee dynasty maintained a magnificent Court in Ispahan. The costume of the royal footmen, who wore peculiar scarlet coats and extraordinary headgear when accompanying the Shah's carriage on state occasions, was possibly a survival from that vanished era.

Though the Shah, when he appeared in public, was surrounded by a good deal of pomp and splendour, the effect was apt to be marred by a certain tawdriness of detail which has probably always been inseparable from Oriental ceremonial. Nevertheless, the whole thing was not unimpressive, and at times carried one's mind back to the days of the Arabian Nights.

In addition to certain recognized sacred places, the royal stables had, from time immemorial, given absolute security to all, save the Shah alone. This was called *Bast*. A modern development of *Bast* was its extension to foreign Legations and to telegraph offices, the latter presumably from an idea of the line ending at the Shah's throne. *Bast* in its origin, it may be added, was similar to the mediæval idea of sanctuary, mosques and shrines affording protection to persons who had managed to reach them.

In due course the British Minister had his first official audience of the Shah, and accompanied by the full staff of the Legation and with the Mira Khor (that is to say, master of the horse) cantering by the side of his carriage, Sir Henry proceeded to the palace. On our arrival there we were given coffee and cigarettes, after which, having put some slippers over our boots, according to the prescribed etiquette, we proceeded to the Audience Hall.

Having been conducted through gardens pleasantly diversified by watercourses, ponds, and trees, we were ushered into the royal presence. I, being the youngest, carried an autograph

letter from Queen Victoria upon a golden tray, which, it seemed to me, I might well have been allowed to keep.

Sir Henry, through an interpreter, made a speech and presented the Queen's letter and the staff of the Legation. The Shah, dressed in a sort of modified Persian coat ornamented with precious stones, and wearing a lambswool cap with a *jika* or plumed ornament—the emblem of sovereignty—was affable enough. On these occasions he assumed an air of command, speaking like one giving orders to troops. Be this as it may, he rapped out a few words expressing his great respect for the Queen, his love of England, and pleasure at having to welcome such an august envoy as Sir Henry. After some further conversation and a few more compliments on both sides, the audience ended.

It may be added that the custom of foreign Missions putting on slippers before entering the Shah's presence now no longer exists. It was originally settled by Treaty, as a concession to the Oriental custom of entering the royal presence with unslipped feet.

Not very long after this, Sir Henry had a private audience of the Shah, who, a day or two later, issued an edict to be promulgated in every town and village in Persia, guaranteeing the life and property of inhabitants of the country against tyranny and injustice.

Sir Henry, who was delighted, at once telegraphed the news to the Foreign Office in London. As, however, after the arrival of every new British Minister, Nasr-ed-Din had done precisely the same thing, the news excited the officials at home but little.

As for the old residents of Tehran, they merely shrugged their shoulders and smiled; the idea of any change in the old Persian policy of rulers grinding every possible penny out of the people seemed to them too absurd for discussion. As a matter of fact the populace, both in the towns and in the country, did not resent official tyranny and extortion as much as might have been imagined.

To them it seemed that any high official or Governor who at all neglected his opportunities for making money was merely a fool. Also in a country like Persia, where individuals had astounding ups and downs, the hardships of being exposed to

shameless rapacity were in some degree softened by the thought that it was not impossible that the sufferer might some day find himself in a position to do some robbing on his own account. It was a well-known fact that the most pitiless extortioners were often men who had begun life in some very poverty-stricken and humble capacity.

On the other hand, a wealthy and powerful Minister or Governor was not infrequently degraded and stripped of all his property at almost a moment's notice.

"Fate," argued many a poor man, "has placed me in a position where I find it difficult to live. Who knows, however, but that someday it may not make me powerful and wealthy," and so, except in times of famine, the ancient system aroused no particular resentment or indignation.

A few years before the Shah, as a concession to European remonstrances against instances of misrule, had decreed that a number of boxes should be put up through Persia in which his subjects could place written complaints as to acts of injustice or cruelty perpetrated by local governors. It is needless to add that the latter took care that no communications likely to cause their recall ever reached Tehran.

Local governorships were, in practically every instance, secured by those ready to pay the highest price for them, and this being so, it was well understood that every Governor was entitled to squeeze as much money as he could out of those over whom he happened to rule.

Nevertheless, there were good Governors as well as bad ones, various degrees of rapacity existing even in a country where grinding the last penny out of a poverty-stricken people aroused no particular indignation.

While those ruling districts and towns had a pretty free hand in levying taxes and contributions, they in their turn were exposed to having to contribute large sums when called upon by the Prince Governor of a province, or by the Shah.

Also the latter might take it into his head to send one of them a Royal Princess as a wife, a most expensive honour which necessitated a large sum being sent up to the treasury at Tehran. In addition to this the bride, being of royal rank, possessed a good deal of power over her husband.

In one case I remember a Persian notable, who had as a youth known the joys of Europe, went off to Paris with all the available cash he could get together.

When after a few months of unalloyed, if expensive, pleasure in the night resorts of the gay capital his funds had vanished away, he ruefully returned home. Hardly had he entered his house when his spouse had him taken into the *Anderoon*, or women's quarters, where she forthwith proceeded to supervise a *bastinado* on the soles of his feet such as her erring husband was never likely to forget. In doing this she was perfectly within her rights. She was of royal blood, and under the circumstances was entitled to such reparation as she chose to exact.

Though in theory Persians may have several wives, in practice they rarely had more than one or two, which was enough for the majority. A husband being bound to maintain his wife in comfort, a well-filled *Anderoon*, or harem, was an expensive affair. Princes and wealthy men occasionally indulged in such a luxury, while the Shah—who, among other privileges, could order any woman in Persia to unveil, had, I believe, two, or perhaps, three hundred women in his palace. He was, however, said seldom to see any of the royal wives, except one especial favourite who was about fifty years of age. He was very attached to this lady who, suffering from some trouble with her eyes, was sent to Vienna for treatment by a great oculist.

In all probability Nasr-ed-Din did not know the majority of his wives by sight. They were, however, valuable commercial assets, any wealthy man to whom the Shah might take it into his head to send them having to present his monarch with a good round sum in return. In addition to this, anyone unlucky enough to be singled out for such an honour had to take over the lady he received as chief wife in his *Anderoon*, where she was bound to be kept in suitable luxury and comfort, besides being accorded special consideration as compared with any other wife.

Of the higher class of Persian women, one saw practically nothing at all, for when they went abroad they were so enveloped in their peculiar outdoor dress and veil that the result was a mere shapeless mass. In the villages, however, the women, and

especially the younger girls, were not so much muffled up, while those of the nomadic tribes, such as the *Illyots*, who lived in tents, could scarcely be said to veil at all.

Jewesses and Armenians, of course, were not too careful as to concealing their charms, but even these, except such as had some connection with Europe, to some extent followed the Persian custom. Though a few of the latter were of dubious morality, there was no regular demi-monde in Tehran.

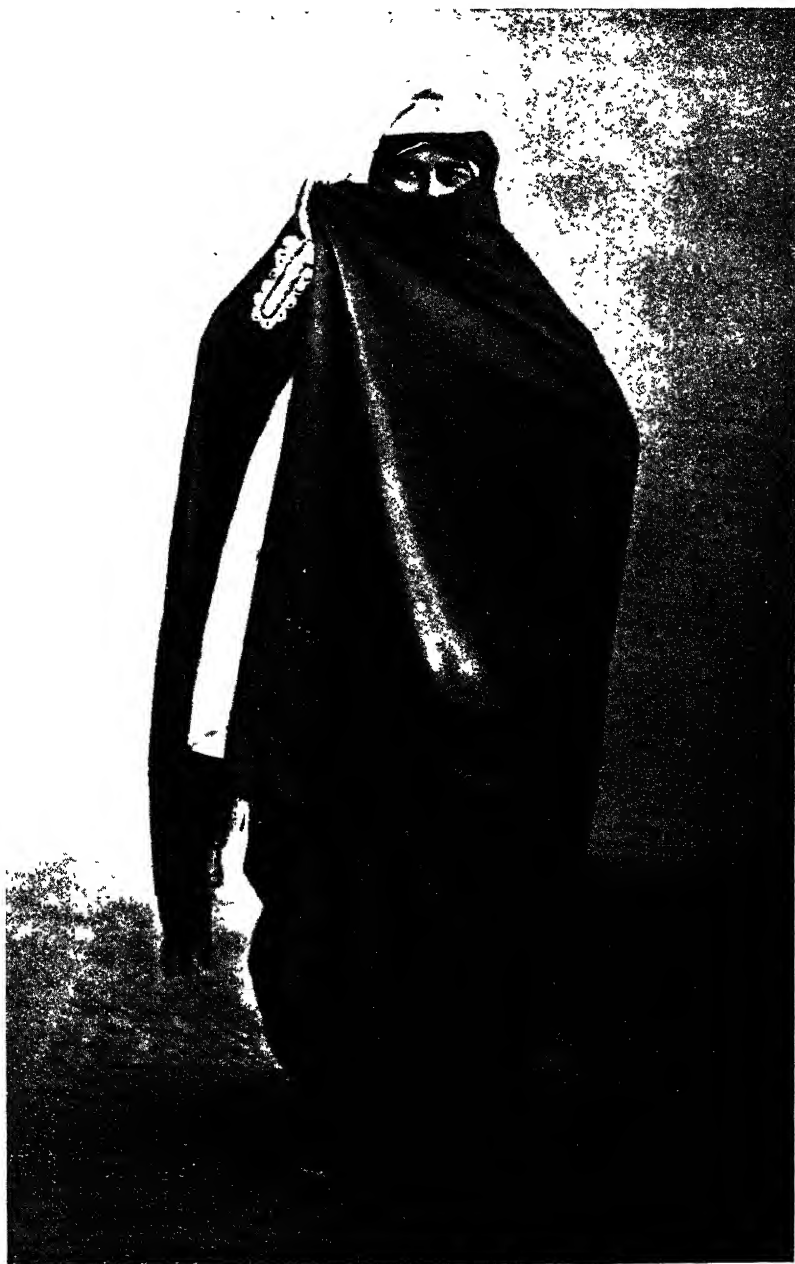
As for the Persian ladies, they were so strictly hedged round with moral and physical safeguards that access to their habitations was very difficult, besides being attended with considerable danger. Love, however, laughs at locksmiths, and intrigues with them, though rare, were not entirely unknown.

The indoor costume of Persian ladies at that time consisted of a gaily coloured bodice and abbreviated puffed out skirt, the legs being generally left bare. According to current report, this garb had been introduced into Persia by the Shah, who, much admiring the ballets he had seen during his visit to Europe in 1872, determined to popularize one of its essential features among his subjects. It is more likely, however, that the whole thing was merely a modern development of the ancient Persian dress. At the present day, I understand, long skirts of brocade, together with a multitude of buttons, have become the fashion.

The famed dancing girls who figure in legends of the East to all outward appearance had ceased to exist, though in the days when Ispahan had been renowned as one of the wonder cities of the world, troupes of them had openly plied for hire.

Since the decay of that ancient capital, however, their saltatorial energies had been ruthlessly curbed, one of the Shahs having prohibited the form of entertainment in which they excelled. In the *Anderoons* or harems, however, female dancers and singers still entertained the inmates, but all this was strictly private and not accessible to European visitors.

As far as can be ascertained, the custom of being entertained by the "singing boys" would appear to have existed in Persia ever since the Mohammedan conquest. Be this as it may, by the middle of the nineteenth century he had long taken the place of the dancing girl, and richly dressed with locks curling to his



PERSIAN WOMAN IN OUTDOOR DRESS





shoulders, his appearance was a usual feature when a wealthy Persian entertained his *Persian* friends.

At dinners given to Europeans, however, the "singing boy" was not *en evidence*. His posturing and antics, as the Persians realized, were often of a kind not palatable to those from the Western world.

Persian singing, with its imitation of the nightingale's note, rings strangely—almost pathetically—upon the European ear. Its trills could be heard ringing out from houses and gardens almost throughout the summer nights. Varying from joyous roudades to slow long-drawn-out laments, they seemed in a way to epitomise the somewhat tragic history of a once great race slowly drifting to decay.

Gipsies and *Lutis*—itinerant jugglers and mountebanks—were often to be met wending their way from town to town, while in a low quarter, just outside Tehran, a number of Kurdish girls belonging to a tribe which had a peculiar morality (or rather immorality) of its own, squatted, unveiled, in tawdry finery designed to attract the passer-by.

At that time anyone meeting carriages conveying the Shah's wives was supposed to turn round so as to prevent his catching a glimpse of them. Members of the British Legation out riding, if they encountered any of these royal favourites with an escort of horsemen and *eunuchs*, always turned their horses out of the road. Failure to do this had, in the past, provoked awkward incidents, for the *eunuchs* in particular were very hot tempered and zealous for the maintenance of ancient customs.

The individuals in question, a number of whom were gigantic blacks, kept excellent order in the royal *seraglio*. There was no fear of palace intrigues in the Tehran of those days, the majestic peace of the old Shah being seldom disturbed.

Had it not been for the proposals and demands of England and Russia, the King of Kings would have led an untroubled life. As it was, Nasr-ed-Din had become a past master as regards getting out of awkward situations, while in the management of his country's internal affairs he was more expert than foreigners were willing to believe. The Shah, it must be remembered, had to take into account the very anti-progressive opinions of a number of his family and of his Ministers

The latter, while often actuated by contempt for Europeans, were essentially obstructive in their methods, in consequence of which the negotiations which led up to the opening of the Karun river to foreign trade were very tedious and difficult to carry on. The more so as Sir Henry, like many European Ministers when dealing with Easterns, was always rather inclined to think that his interpreter was not giving him the correct sense of what was being said.

On one occasion when the British Minister, accompanied by some of his staff, was having an interview with the Shah's Prime Minister, the *Ameen es Sultan*, as the latter was called, turned to his brother and said, "Strange folk these infidels! The Karun has been shut for seven thousand years and now the English want it opened to-morrow!"

When the interpreter told Sir Henry, the latter flew into a temper, not believing that such a serious matter could be treated so lightly. In the course of subsequent negotiations, however, he became more accustomed to the intricacies of Persian thought and phrase.

I well remember the evening when the Shah's Prime Minister dined at the Legation, previous to according his assent to the establishment of the Tobacco Monopoly, which, owing to the opposition of the *mullahs* (priests) and people was eventually cancelled. Though it was fairly certain that the *Ameen* would sign, Persian Ministers being funny people, great care was taken to keep him in a good temper.

Invited after dinner to discuss details with Sir Henry and commercial experts who were arranging matters, our guest gave signs of boredom, in order to banish which he was tactfully lured into the billiard room where he played a game of billiards with me. Care having been taken that he should secure an easy victory, he went back to the conclave in high good temper, and everything went off without a hitch.

Nasr-ed-Din did not as a rule remain in his palace at Tehran for long stretches of time. Besides shooting excursions in the mountains, he was fond of moving about the country, when he was accompanied by a retinue equal to a fair-sized army.

Justly described as "the last true Shah" he was, in practice as well as in theory, an absolute despot. His word was like the

law of the Medes and Persians, and his power was restricted only by custom, expediency, and a wholesome dread of provoking European intervention.

While in dealing with his subjects the Shah was to some degree restrained by ancient usage, his authority over the persons and property of his family, his Ministers and officials was quite absolute. In addition to being free to kill, confiscate or banish, he could sell the families of disgraced Ministers into slavery or order the offender to be killed. In some cases, I believe, he did have objectionable or dishonest men quietly removed, but for the most part he was merciful, not having polished off nearly so many people as some of his predecessors, who also often blinded their heirs, who were thus rendered unfit to intrigue.

The Kadjar dynasty, to which the Shah belonged, never followed this practice. The only real acts of harshness perpetrated by Nasr-ed-Din were those directed against the followers of the *Baab*, a prophet who started a new religion, —the tenets of which the Shah did not like at all.

The original *Baab*, or founder of this new creed, having been seized at Tabriz, was tied up against a wall to be shot. When, however, the soldiers had fired and the smoke had cleared away, no *Baab* was to be seen. After the firing party had recovered from its astonishment, someone suggested a search, and eventually the *Baab* was discovered hidden in a shop.

The fact was that the old-fashioned bullets, while scarcely grazing him, had cut the ropes by which the prisoner was bound. Had the latter stood where he was and shouted out, "You cannot touch me, I am a prophet," the movement which he led might have triumphed throughout Persia. As it was, the *Baab* was simply dragged out of his retreat and killed. A certain number of his followers, however, survive, the headquarters of *Baabism* in modern times being at Acre.

The greatest English authority upon *Baabism* is Professor Browne, of Pembroke College, Cambridge, who has published erudite and valuable books upon the subject. He came to Tehran while I was there and I remember his enthusiasm for everything Persian. It seemed to us indeed that he gave the natives of the country credit for more good qualities than they really possessed. A profound scholar and student, I do not

think he realized or wished to realize the craft and cunning of the East. On the other hand, there was often so much pessimism about most of the Europeans who had made any lengthy sojourn in Persia that their judgment concerning that country was apt to become warped and narrow.

Mr. Chauncy Cartwright, whose organizing abilities had been of great use to Sir Henry, returned to England after some months, but on the other hand our staff was augmented by the arrival of Mr. Bax-Ironside, who afterwards as Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, K.C.M.G., was Minister in Bulgaria at the outbreak of the Great War.

Mr. Fairfax Cartwright, another second Secretary, subsequently represented his country at a foreign Court. As the Rt. Hon. Sir Fairfax Leighton Cartwright, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., he was Ambassador to Vienna from 1908 to 1913, just before the outbreak of the Great War, which he was one of the few to foresee. Sir Fairfax, who was an exceptionally gifted and cultured diplomat, in addition to other literary work, wrote a poetic book entitled "The Mystic Rose," in which he so completely assimilated the Persian style that certain critics took it for a translation.

A very valuable member of the Legation staff was Mr. Sidney Churchill, an exceptionally brilliant Oriental scholar. Having passed a considerable part of his youth in Persia he had become a real authority upon the country and its inhabitants. He also had an intimate knowledge of Persian art; through him, I believe, the British Museum acquired a number of treasures.

Originally an official in the Indo-European Telegraph service, he had been appointed Oriental second secretary to the Legation at Tehran, in 1886. In 1894, having left Persia, he entered the Consular service and died Consul-General at Naples in January, 1921.

Mr. Churchill had a peculiar knack of hunting out works of art not accessible to the ordinary run of Europeans. Whenever any of the Legation was desirous of obtaining rare pottery, brasswork, or carpets, they consulted him. With his assistance, Mr. Fairfax Cartwright formed a small but first-class collection of scarce lustre ware, carpets and other Persian antiquities. Years later, I found Mr. Churchill at Palermo, where he was

Consul for the Island of Sicily in the late nineties, and there too he had acquired an intimate knowledge of Sicilian antiquities.

Though the modern wares sold by the itinerant dealers who visited the Legation had, as a rule, little artistic merit, I was assured that a purchaser ready to spend money and give a craftsman or carpet maker plenty of time could procure very good things.

I have indeed seen fine modern carpets, and have myself possessed a *kalumdan* or pen case (stolen from me) which, as regards workmanship and design, almost equalled those produced a hundred years before. The pen cases in question, as well as mirror cases (*aine*) and small boxes, are coated with a peculiar kind of sun dried lacquer painted so as to produce a graceful Vernis Martin effect. The figures on the best of them are finely executed and designed, the subjects chosen being usually some Persian legend, a love scene or the exploits of a legendary hero, roses and nightingales not infrequently figuring in the scheme of decoration.

Sir Arthur Nicolson's successor as Secretary of Legation was Sir Robert John Kennedy, of Cultra, County Down, who with his wife afterwards travelled to the Russian frontier beyond Meshed, an adventurous and trying journey for a lady to undertake on horseback, which was the only way in which it could then be performed.

Constant visitors at the Legation were Colonel Wells, R.E., and his charming wife. The former, who was head of the telegraph service, died comparatively young, as did Dr. Odling, a resident of Tehran, who later on became doctor to the Legation. He and his pleasant Scotch wife were much liked by all of us.

In those days there were not more than eighty Europeans all told in Tehran—nevertheless our existence, though everyone grumbled, was not dull.

Sir Henry, one of the most generous men who ever lived, fed the whole of his staff, except those who were married, at the Legation table, besides which he generally had guests—rarely did less than twelve or fourteen sit down to dinner, at which, owing to the Minister's well-known powers as a *raconteur*, hilarity generally prevailed.

Now and then he would give a dance to which most of the European residents and also the European wives and daughters of various concession hunters and Persian officials were bidden.

There was at that time a scarcity of ladies in Tehran with the result that such as were there had a very good time, being in great request for social functions, dinners, or dances. In the case of the latter, the youngest and most good-looking ones were not infrequently booked as partners days before.

Owing to the scarcity mentioned above, the line of social demarcation was somewhat relaxed from that prevailing in Europe and on the rare occasion of a ball at any of the Legations the wives and daughters of the majority of European residents, irrespective of their occupation, very rightly received invitations.

On one occasion Sir Henry gave a fancy dress ball at the Legation which created great excitement. Everyone, except officers who came in uniform, wore fancy dress—Sir Henry himself appearing as Cagliostro, in a long robe flecked all over with cabalistic signs made by Lady Wolff.

A certain vivacious official attached to the Legation came, perhaps not inappropriately, as a fool, and, catching sight from behind of "Cagliostro," caught him a resounding bang on the back with his fool's bladder.

Wheeling round in a towering rage, Sir Henry thundered, "I suspend you," and then ordered his assailant immediately to quit the ball room. It was only about three o'clock in the morning, when very great conviviality prevailed, that by the good offices of one of the staff the poor crestfallen fool was allowed to join the revellers at supper.

The music at these entertainments was furnished either by the Persian Cossack band or the band of some other Persian regiment. The native musicians did not play badly, their main fault being a tendency to take everything very fast.

Two European bandmasters supervised the musical training of the Shah's troops. One was an Austrian, Gebauer by name, the other a Frenchman, Monsieur Lemaire, who, before the disastrous war of 1870, had, it was said, conducted the band of a regiment of *Voltigeurs de la Garde*. A smart little man and good musician, he always wore a French uniform and *kepi*.

Very few of his countrymen were to be found in Tehran; there was, however, a French resident who, having been detected in an intrigue with a Persian woman, had been asked to choose whether he would become a Mussulman or his paramour be killed. He had, of course, chosen the first alternative and married the woman according to Mohammedan law, after which he took to living in Persian fashion, being rarely seen by his fellow Europeans.

One of the most agreeable characters in Tehran was Doctor Tholozan, the Shah's French medical attendant. Belonging to the old school, he was full of courtesy, geniality and charm. In later years his daughter married Mr. Harry Churchill, one of a family who was well known in connection with the Consular and Diplomatic work in Persia. Dr. Tholozan was said to possess great influence with the Shah, which was probably true. In any case such influence as he had was always used for good, and the courtly old Frenchman was universally popular.

A well-known figure in the Tehran society of those days was General Hootum Schindler, an English subject, I believe, though a Dutchman by birth. General Schindler occupied an important position under the Persian Government, besides which he was Admiral of the Persian Fleet, which consisted of one small derelict paddle-boat lying off Bushire.

A clever man and admirable conversationalist, he himself was the first to laugh at his naval distinctions. Possessing an unrivalled and accurate knowledge of Persia and Persian affairs, General Schindler furnished much valuable information to students, diplomats and commercial men interested in the country. He it was, I believe, who some years later gave Lord Curzon valuable assistance towards writing the excellent book on Persia which has now become so difficult to get.

The General, whose encyclopædic knowledge was much appreciated by Sir Henry, was a frequent guest at the British Legation where he was very popular.

Though Russian officers came to our dinners and parties, they did not, as a rule, see very much of the members of our staff. A certain tension then prevailing as to whether the influence of England or Russia should preponderate in Persia; the officers in question were afraid of being too intimate with



us lest their Minister should accuse them of being won over by the enemy. The consequences of this, as they had good reason to know, might be disgrace and Siberia.

An exception, however, was a certain Captain Blumer, who, after a vivacious career in the Imperial Guard at St. Petersburg, had become an instructor of Persian Cossacks in order to recoup his somewhat shattered fortune. This gallant officer, who had some English blood in his veins, was often at our Legation, where he used to play lawn tennis just as if he were a member of the staff.

Though among his own countrymen under suspicion of being too favourable to England, he never allowed his fondness for that country to impair his activity on behalf of Russian interests. He it was, indeed, who a year or two before, with some military colleagues, had paid a visit to Ispahan, where the Shah's eldest son, the Zil es Sultan (notoriously favourable to England), had organized quite an efficient little army.

Blumer and the other Russians, having seen these troops at a special review, warmly congratulated the Zil upon the organization and proficiency of his force. Ten days later, however, when the Russian officers had returned to Tehran, the Zil received imperative orders from his father, the Shah, at once to disband his troops. The Russians, wishing to keep Persia weak, had persuaded the old Shah that his son was organizing an army in order to seize the supreme power.

The most important of our diplomatic colleagues was the Russian Minister, Prince Dolgorouki, a tall, handsome, middle-aged man who had enjoyed life to the full and looked as if he had done so. His appointment to the Legation at Tehran had, I believe, been something in the nature of a punishment for this *viveur*, who never failed to contrast the joys of a great European capital with the dull and somewhat squalid tedium of his present post.

As a matter of fact the Prince had come to Persia rather in disgrace. Some years before he had been concerned in one of several expeditions sent to subdue the Tekke Turkomans which had sustained a disastrous defeat at the hands of these unsympathetic nomads. The latter had attacked the Russians with such ferocity that their commander and his staff, while

enjoying an excellent lunch, had had to fly for their lives. The Prince, indeed, was said to be more efficient as a diplomat than as a soldier.

The Tekke Turkomans, though on this and other occasions they made a gallant fight, were eventually completely conquered by Skobeleff, their stronghold of Geok Tepe being taken and the whole place given up to three days' slaughter and rapine in 1881. Thus ended the Turkoman terror which for so many generations had dominated Persian travellers and cost so much property and life.

Prince Dolgorouki, who spoke English fairly and French very well, was charming to all of us when he dined at the British Legation, or when we dined with him. He would speak lovingly of Paris, "such a different place, as he said, from dismal Tehran."

"All I want to do now," he would add, "is to work out my time as comfortably as I can. I hate all political squabbles and questions; indeed, there is nothing to be done with Persia while the old Shah lives. After his death who knows what may happen, perhaps the deluge!" And he would shrug his shoulders.

"That excellent Sir Henry of yours," he would continue, "is so diabolically active-minded that he cannot see this and let things rest. Whenever we meet he wants to talk about partitions, zones of influence and agreements, all of which, besides being out of the question at present, are horribly tedious. He will not understand that it is as much to the interest of England as to that of Russia to let sleeping dogs lie."

This of course was all very well, but Prince Dolgorouki, though ostensibly easy-going and lazy, took very good care secretly to promote the interests of his country on every occasion. When, for instance, he presided at a fête given to the Persian Cossacks outside Tehran, a good number of Imperials were distributed, wrapped up with various prizes awarded to the most expert horsemen. This, though kept very secret, became known at the British Legation. Receiving more support from St. Petersburg than Sir Henry ever got from London, the Prince generally managed to obtain what he wanted from the Persians, who always bore in mind their long line of frontier with Russia and had a wholesome dread of the bayonets massed behind it.

Sir Henry, however, was pretty well informed of all the Russian Minister's machinations, and though not given the same support from home, managed to keep the Persians from entirely throwing themselves into the arms of the Bear. I do not think that Prince Dolgorouki was lying when he spoke of his liking for peace and quiet; still, the position of a Russian Minister demanding some demonstration of strength, he was obliged from time to time to show the authorities at St. Petersburg that he was making Russia's influence felt.

An aristocrat of aristocrats, the Prince paid little attention to his own staff, who, with one or two exceptions, were drawn from a particular class of officials trained as experts in Eastern affairs.

It was said, indeed, that the Russian Minister was in the habit of sending for the rather good-looking Circassian wife of one of the secretaries and making her dance on the table after dinner. This was probably an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that he was treated with enormous deference by his staff, even the most bibulous of whom would pull himself thoroughly together directly his chief hove in sight.

The Turkish Ambassador, Khalil Khalid Bey, was an impressive-looking old Turk of benevolent appearance, who appeared to be suffering from melancholy of a gentle, if chronic, kind.

Once the tutor of the Sultan Abdul Hamid, owing to some palace plot he had fallen from favour and been sent to Tehran, where he had been Ambassador for about ten years. It was said that all he got from his Government was the Embassy with its garden, no salary being sent him from Constantinople. In spite of this he made no effort to return home, the fact being that had he done so the Sultan would in all probability have finished him off.

Khalil Khalid Bey, it was generally understood, looked upon the tenure of his Embassy as a sort of honourable exile, slightly preferable to death. Notwithstanding his very slender resources he had excellent cigarettes, and occasionally entertained in a good simple fashion.

*Ecarté*, it was understood, was his ruling passion, but owing to the poor old gentleman's no doubt justly deserved reputation as an expert, he did not often get the opportunity of a prolonged



THE BRITISH LEGATION, TEHRAN



sitting. While I was in Tehran, however, the benign old Turk did have one good stroke of luck.

A rather wild and wealthy young Bavarian Count who had come to Persia on a shooting trip, having stopped at Tehran, chanced to bewail the absence of cards, there being at that time no club or other centre of gambling in the Persian capital. Khalil Khalid Bey, anxious to make the young visitor comfortable, rose to the occasion and gave a small but excellent dinner, the guests at which were all card players. When the party broke up at five in the morning, the Count was minus a good many hundred *tomauns* (the *tomaun* at that time being worth about ten shillings).

He proceeded on his travels, and shortly afterwards we heard he had committed suicide. Evil-disposed people blamed the envoy of the Sublime Porte, but from a well-informed source we learnt that the state of depression which had caused the young noble to take his life arose not from any lack of means but from grief and rage at having at a Persian dinner party been placed two seats lower down the table than his rank and quarterings entitled him to sit.

Besides the old Ambassador there was a Secretary at the Turkish Embassy who, unTurklike, was seized with a violent passion for dancing. So excited did he become in the course of the Lancers or Quadrille—old-fashioned dances then still in full swing—that people sometimes wondered what he might be going to do next.

For some reason or other he fell into disgrace, was sent back to Constantinople, or banished to some distant province where the joys of European terpsichore were unknown.

The French Minister, a man of means, rather touchy about his dignity, had a very thorough knowledge of Persia and of the devious methods of its rulers.

One of the most charming men in Tehran was the American Minister, Mr. Spencer Pratt, a veritable diplomatic D'Orsay, of handsome appearance and charming address. A constant visitor at the British Legation, he was very popular with all of our staff.

There was also a Spanish Minister, while Germany, which in those days had not begun to interfere in Persian affairs, was

represented by Baron Schenck zu Schweinsberg, hereditary cup-bearer to the Duke of Hesse, a genial Teuton of the old school who, on his departure, was succeeded by "Major Doctor von Winkler," a more active representative of the Kaiser, who was something between the old school and the new.

Austria, which at that time had no particular interests at Tehran, was represented by an ex-cavalry General of slender figure and stiff and erect appearance who, when in full uniform, much resembled an old picture of Napoleonic days; very ceremonious, he spoke slowly and somewhat like a speaking doll, took some time getting his words out at all, the result of his having been ridden over in a charge at Sadowa or Austerlitz some said, for he was of great age.

His Italian colleague, on the other hand, was short, fat, garrulous and genial. No one enjoyed a greater reputation for giving good dinners than he. As a gastronomist in any European capital he would have ranked high, it being currently believed that besides knowing how to order he could actually cook a first-class meal should occasion arise.

He and his agreeable wife led a very comfortable life in Tehran, the sole work of the Italian Legation at that time being, rumour said, an attempt to enforce a commercial claim which had been a disputed question for years and which cynics declared the Italian Minister was in no hurry to get settled, because once that was done there would be no reason for his not returning home.

Be this as it may, he was a very popular figure in Tehran, and being a man of shrewd common sense, was often consulted by his colleagues including Sir Henry, who telegraphed conversations with him back to the Foreign Office to such an extent that we came to dread the results of a meeting between the two Ministers.

Sir Henry, always most conscientious about keeping in touch with the Foreign Office, was liable to become very active over any occurrence which seemed to demand diplomatic action. In one year the cost of telegrams came to something like ten thousand pounds.

I well remember his telegraphic activity in the case of Katie Greenfield, an English girl who, it was reported, had been

abducted at Tabriz by a Kurd. Lord Salisbury, to whom the news was instantly wired, did not see that anything could be done. How could he, poor man, sitting in London, prevent Kurds running off with girls who, like Katie, seemed not unwilling to be abducted?

This, however, did not satisfy Sir Henry who began to telegraph freely. The Foreign Office were soon overwhelmed with details concerning the Kurdish Don Juan and the lass he had lured from her simple home. Eventually the British authorities insisted upon the Persian Government taking action.

Thereupon the Kurd, who was a Turkish subject, assumed a combative attitude, and with a number of wild tribesmen, entrenched himself and declared he would fight to the death. The Persians, who did not like discussions with armed Kurds, eventually arranged that Katie should have an interview with the British agent. She told the latter that she had gone off with the Kurd of her own free will, and as his wife, should certainly refuse to leave him.

As a matter of fact, her name was not Greenfield at all, her father having been a British-protected Hungarian called Grünfeld. Had all this been known before, a good deal of the British taxpayers' money would have been saved.

Among the residents of Tehran were a number who occupied an ambiguous position, being received at some Legations and ignored by others. One of this class was the Comte de Monteforte, a noble Neapolitan who, it was said, had held high office in the Naples police under the infamous King Bomba.

When, to the unutterable relief of his unfortunate subjects, that monarch had ceased to rule, the Count, having strayed to Persia, had placed his services, as one skilled in preserving law and order, at the disposal of the Shah who eventually appointed him Chief of the Tehran police, a body which, I fancy, was entirely organized or at least remodelled by its new chief.

The experience gained in Naples had not been lost on Monteforte, who, considering that his men received practically no pay and had to eke out a livelihood by all sorts of queer methods, did better than would have been thought possible.

The force, armed with old Austrian swords and unreliable revolvers, were not too shabbily dressed, good order prevailed



in the streets, and robberies (at least from Europeans) were generally soon discovered and their perpetrators well flogged after being stripped of any worldly goods they might possess.

I do not know what salary the Comte de Monteforte received from the Shah—very little I should say, for the astute old monarch hated parting with money and would probably have been of the opinion that any Chief of Police armed with full official powers who could not make a good thing of his post outside of any salary, could not be worth his salt.

In any case the Count, who had a wife and pretty daughter, having fully mastered his job, had prospered exceedingly since his arrival in Persia.

His position at the Persian Court, however, was more secure than among his fellow Europeans. Some of the latter occasionally asked him to dinner, some did not. Among the latter were the French Minister and his wife who were bitter enemies of the Neapolitan noble. Various reasons were currently alleged for this hostility. It was certainly a fact that at a Review of Persian troops the Comte de Monteforte had appeared in a cocked hat, identical with that worn by French Generals. This the Minister had interpreted as an insult to France, in consequence of which he had demanded the Count's dismissal.

The old Shah, however, who found his Chief of Police cheap and efficient, would not consent to anything of the sort. He did, however, agree to forbid the wearing of the French cocked hat which the Minister had openly declared he would tear from Monteforte's head in view of all Tehran. Henceforth the latter wore a Persian *Kola*, or black lambswool cap adorned with a gorgeous badge well in keeping with an elaborate uniform of his own invention.

Various less veracious reasons were given for the feud between the French Legation and the Chief of Police. Another European resident who, it was rumoured, increased his income by various forms of private trading, was held in even greater detestation by the French Minister, owing to the latter's purchase of a bath lined with such cheap and indifferent enamel that one fine day the Minister's good-looking wife had found herself stuck fast to the bottom. The poor lady, it was reported, had sustained painful if superficial injuries during the delicate

process of getting herself unstuck. Though time, the great healer, soon obliterated the scars caused by the bath, it was powerless to allay the resentment of her husband, and neither the amateur trader or Comte de Monteforte were ever asked to the French Legation.

Though there were others who followed the French Minister's lead, Prince Dolgorouki did not ; indeed, Monteforte was often at the Russian Legation. Sir Henry, therefore, who liked to race neck and neck with his only serious rival, took an early occasion of asking the Comte, Comtesse and Mademoiselle de Monteforte to dinner at the Legation, and in due course all three made their appearance. Sir Henry's predecessor had taken little notice of the Montefortes and they were consequently extremely flattered and delighted. Lady Wolff, who spoke Italian perfectly, received a flood of compliments in that language, while for the rest of us there were pretty speeches in French which the Count, as well as his attractive daughter, spoke with considerable facility.

My experience has been that people generally have no reason to regret being civil to others even when the reputation of the latter is not entirely above criticism. The Comte de Monteforte, during my stay in Tehran at least, always did anything he could to facilitate matters for the British Legation, and I think did really appreciate the very genial and unbounded hospitality dispensed there.

Sir Henry was the most generous of men ; I always think he must have expended a great part of his salary in the constant luncheons, dinners and dances which he gave to the English and other Europeans then in Tehran. If all I have heard is true, one or two of those who came after him at the Legation took care not to follow his example. The good old traditions of unlimited hospitality are liable to be ignored by modern diplomats, too many of whom have tried to pinch a reserve fund for their old age out of a salary specially given for purposes of entertaining.

Sir Henry, besides extending a generous welcome to all British residents, made little attempt to check the peculations of Persian servants. Owing to ancient custom these, to a certain extent, had to be taken as a matter of course,

On one occasion when a Persian of high rank had given a great party, a member of the *Corps Diplomatique* bade another European guest look behind the curtains of the room in which dinner had been served. There, piled up one on the top of the other near the windows, were a great number of full champagne bottles.

"Our host knows perfectly well what his servants have been doing," said the diplomat. "That sort of thing being considered merely as part of their perquisites is quite usual. Whenever I hear that a rich Persian has been entertaining Europeans, I send out to the Bazaars to buy some of the champagne, which, like the bottles you have seen, is sure to have been kept for sale by the servants."

Personal property meant very little to the latter. On another occasion a certain *Chargé d'Affaires*, dining with some English residents, noticed his hostess who was sitting next him, turn as red as fire.

"Whatever will you think of us?" said she, pointing to the initials on her napkin, which were those of the guest.

Her servants, it appeared, being of opinion that their mistress's linen was not sufficiently good for such a distinguished visitor, had sent to the latter's butler for a supply of the Legation napkins, which they placed on the table as a matter of course.

My own servant, Ali, was a black who had originally been a slave, but had obtained his freedom. The form of slavery which, to some extent then still prevailed in Persia, was, it should be added, very light. In most instances a slave was looked upon as an old family servant and very well treated, his only fear often being lest he should be freed and turned adrift to spend his life in different situations as a servant. In his original position, without any thought for the morrow, he was sure of being well looked after till the last day of his life.

Besides this, many slaves enjoyed the privilege of telling their masters or mistresses exactly what they thought and, in some instances, actually dominated the households in which they served.

I never knew how Ali had drifted into freedom. Before coming to me he had been employed in the French Legation and I rather fancy that the latter had had something to do with it.

French was the only European language he spoke. Neat, civil and exceedingly gentle in his ways, I never had any occasion to give him a serious blowing up. He did not, however, get on so well in his next place. Having, after my departure become servant to a newly arrived Englishman, the latter probably thinking that blacks were meant to be beaten, one day threatened Ali with a thrashing. Without saying a word, the prophet's namesake went out, got a donkey and trotted off to a sanctuary or *Bast*, outside Tehran, from which, when I last heard of him, he was resolutely refusing to budge.

Englishmen, and more especially Anglo-Indians, new to Persia, frequently made the mistake of imagining that the natives could be struck with impunity. Gentle enough at ordinary times, the Persians (and as has been seen even the black slaves in their employ) would not stand being beaten by a European.

I remember the case of a rather distinguished English officer coming up to Tehran from the Gulf who got into considerable trouble through not realizing this. Having for some reason or other fallen out with some villagers whom he came across, he declared he would thrash them. Within half an hour a large and hostile crowd of Persians confronted his party whom they said they intended to kill.

The Englishmen had to take refuge in the *Chapar Khaneh*, or post house where, owing to fear of their rifles, with difficulty they were able to keep the mob at bay. One of their native attendants eventually got out and made his way to a telegraph station with the result that the local Governor sent a force of mounted *sowars* who extricated the English from a very awkward situation.



## CHAPTER VII



## CHAPTER VII

Visitors from Europe.—A day's sport in the Shah's preserves.—The only railway in Persia.—Riding *Chapar* with Sir Edward Fitzgerald Law.—On horseback to Ispahan.—The Kohrud Pass.—Vanished glories of the ancient capital.—The great Maidan.—Palace of Chihil Situn.—Julfa.—The Baktians.—The Zil-es-Sultan.—Our interview with that Prince Governor.—Anecdote.—A Kurdish chief and his son visit the British Legation.—Horsekeeping in Persia.—I win a race.—My journey to Meshed.—Nishapur.—The Tekke Turkoman and their raids.—Geok Tepe.—The spirit of the Kevir.—The joys of the open road.—Persian villagers.—My ride to Hamadan.—Missionary life in Persia.—A Prince Governor and Burton's *Arabian Nights*.—The charm of Persia.

FROM time to time we had visitors from England at the Legation where officers from India, who had come up to Tehran through the south, were also entertained. Baron George de Reuter passed months in the Persian capital in connection with his concession which entailed constant negotiations with Persian officials. Major Talbot also spent some time arranging a tobacco concession which, though granted by the Shah, was eventually annulled.

I believe the failure of this very valuable tobacco monopoly (for that is what the concession really came to) was that the directors in London, being for the most part quite ignorant of the country and people with whom they were dealing, refused to adopt the methods advocated by persons who understood the idiosyncrasies of the Persian mind.

Ignoring the tortuous ways which have always been popular in Persia they tried to force western methods upon men who neither understood nor liked them. The result was that the populace violently resented the newly established tobacco *régie* as a foreign innovation. Serious riots occurred and the Shah becoming alarmed took strong action and cancelled the concession altogether. In all probability this agitation against the tobacco monopoly was in a great measure fostered by agents



of Russia, which at that time regarded Persia as her own preserve and bitterly resented any commercial privileges being granted to other countries.

Another visitor to Tehran was Colonel the Honourable Reginald Talbot, who was very anxious to be allowed to have a day's sport in the royal shooting grounds. All sport in the mountains near the capital was then rigorously reserved for the Shah, whose shooting boxes were surrounded in some cases by little huts for the royal wives who occasionally accompanied him on such excursions.

It was rarely that a European was given permission to kill game in these preserves, but after a good deal of tactful negotiation Lord Salisbury's cousin got what he wanted, and a small party, which included myself and some other members of the Legation, drove to the foot of certain mountains near Tehran.

Here a sumptuous lunch had been prepared, the Shah having sent a crowd of servants and horsemen who greeted us in the most ceremonious fashion. We took a long time over an elaborate meal served in European style by a number of richly garbed attendants.

Eventually, accompanied by a mounted escort of Persians, headed by the Shah's chief *shikari* on a splendid Arab, we commenced our ascent into the hills which our quarry (wild sheep) were supposed to frequent.

For hours we rode through defiles and over rocky plains, not a trace of anything to shoot did we find. Every now and then, when we were becoming thoroughly tired out the *shikari* would urge his beautiful horse up some almost inaccessible height, from which he would survey the country lying around. Then suddenly he would wave his arms and away the whole mass of horsemen would gallop off to a spot from which we were told Colonel Talbot could get a good shot. But when we got there nothing was to be seen. At last, just as the light was waning, the Colonel was given a chance and the one wild sheep which he secured was the total result of the day's sport.

The real truth was that the wily old Shah, a keen sportsman and a first-class shot but very jealous of anyone but himself killing game in his own special preserves, had given orders that



FOOTMEN OF THE SHAH



the day's bag should not be large. Hence the crowd of horsemen and the delay over lunch!

It must not, however, be imagined that there is not good sport to be obtained in Persia. During a fortnight's sport in Mazanderan and Ghilan two guns secured four bears, seventeen wild boars and eight small wild sheep. The sportsmen who were granted special permission by the Shah were treated with the greatest civility by the natives, everything being done to promote their comfort.

As regards fishing, one of the two, a Secretary of the English Legation, who did not claim to be a first class fisherman, on another occasion caught no less than one hundred and thirty-six trout at Lar, some distance from Tehran.

Indulgence in sport in Persia was hampered by the long distances which had to be covered. There was, of course, plenty of game in the mountains not far away from Tehran, but as has been said the shooting there was reserved for the Shah. Good sport always necessitated a lengthy ride.

There were then no railways in Persia except a few miles of line from Tehran to Shah Abdul Azim which was completed in the "eighties." The line in question, it may be added, has no commercial importance, Shah Abdul Azim being only noteworthy for its mosque.

When the line was first opened several awkward incidents occurred owing to the Persians being unused to railroads. A traveller being seized with a desire to stop got out half-way while the train was in motion with the result that he was severely injured or killed. The rest of the passengers were furious at this and when they reached their destination dragged the driver—a Belgian—off his engine and after having tied him up beat him within an inch of his life as being an agent of *Sheitan* (the devil) for the massacre of true believers.

For some time after this the little railway was unpopular, but before I left Tehran I saw a trainful of passengers looking happy enough. A special carriage was reserved for women who had a eunuch railway guard all to themselves.

From time to time schemes for building railways were brought to the notice of the Shah but none of them came to anything. To begin with he himself had little liking for such a new-fangled

method of locomotion, his own journeys in a carriage or on horse-back being carried out in a most comfortable if leisurely fashion with an enormous suite and hundreds of horsemen and servants to minister to his wants. Secondly, his people as he was well aware looked upon new European inventions, especially when connected with fire and smoke, as devices of the evil one. Thirdly, if he granted a railway concession to one European power its rival or rivals would immediately demand some compensating advantage in the way of commercial facilities or actual territory. This being so things went on as they had done from time immemorial.

People travelled on mules, horses and camels with their wives and families, but if in a hurry they rode *chapar*, which was a posting system with relays of horses and stations where they could be hired or changed on certain routes connecting the principal towns of Persia. A postboy and sometimes a led horse for luggage accompanied travellers from stage to stage, each relay being taken back after it had been rested. Riding *chapar* or post was a trying ordeal for anyone not accustomed to it.

One needed little food, the best plan being to carry tinned soups which could be easily prepared the moment one reached a halting place. This, together with something light like sardines, eaten with the not unpalatable native bread, which was always procurable, usually seemed enough. As for alcohol I rarely took any myself. In summer I drank the delicious Persian lime juice mixed with water—in winter cocoa satisfied both hunger and thirst.

After a long distance ride one thoroughly enjoyed a good bottle of champagne the first evening after arriving at one's destination. Some people maintained that it was a good thing to take a few half bottles of that sparkling wine on *chapar* journeys. Its effect as a restorative after a long day in the saddle they declared was unequalled. Carrying champagne, however, necessarily entailed taking another horse and, as the baggage horses were always wretched, tended to prolong the time taken on a journey.

¶ Sitting for days in the saddle was apt to make people not used to long rides uncomfortable not to say sore. The Secretary of

a foreign Legation who was not accustomed to riding *chapar*, having started off for Ispahan a flippant young diplomat thought it a good joke to send the traveller a telegram enquiring how that part of his person which had been in direct contact with the saddle felt? To make matters worse he signed it with the name of the traveller's *fiancée*! The result was a terrible row, a serious diplomatic incident being eventually settled only by profuse apologies.

My first *chapar* journey was taken in company with Major Law (afterwards Sir Edward Law, K.C.M.G., Financial Adviser to the Council of India) who had been appointed commercial attaché for Russia, Turkey and Persia, in which capacity he came to the Legation some time after our arrival.

An artillery officer, who had seen service in the Soudan, he had, while engaged in business in Russia, greatly impressed Sir Robert Morier, at that time British Ambassador in St. Petersburg. Endowed with a vivacious and agreeable personality Major Law was a man with an insatiable appetite for work. His energy and activity were absolutely unbounded and having made an investigation of the commercial situation in the Persian capital, he decided to pay a visit to Ispahan. To my great satisfaction it was arranged that I should go with him, and accompanied by Nadir Ali Khan, a *gholam* or messenger attached to the Legation, we set out on our journey one beautiful evening.

As it was then very hot we dined just outside Tehran, and started off by night on the first stage of our ride. Before we had gone many miles, Major Law, who had been invalided home from the Soudan on account of illness, began to feel unwell, and after a time he had to get off his horse and lie down by the side of the bridle track across the desert. Fortunately I always carried chlorodyne, and after I had given him a very large dose, he was able to proceed. Nevertheless, throughout the journey he continued to be very indisposed; eventually, however, the healthy open-air life pulled him round.

As I have said, we travelled by night taking our sleep during the heat of the day, as a rule under any shelter we could find in a post-house or village. The clearness of the air in Persia is marvellous, over the desert we could see for miles ahead.

The most beautiful part of the journey to Ispahan was the crossing of the Kohrud Pass, situated at a considerable altitude amid the most magnificent scenery. The lofty mountains over which this pass winds rise straight up out of the arid desert, and when one reaches the summit the charm of the wooded oasis, with its stream, waterfall, and little village embowered in verdure is indescribably sweet.

We halted at this divine spot just as dawn was breaking when Major Law declared that he saw a small tiger or leopard slinking amidst the trees. I never contradict those in authority, but in my opinion it was merely a big tom cat.

Descending from the mountains into the plain after a certain number of stages we came to the outskirts of Ispahan. For a distance, I should say, of about two miles, ruins attest the former splendour of Persia's ancient capital, which, till its siege and capture by the Afghans in 1728 was said to be one of the wonders of the world.

A number of huge and ancient dovecots surround the city, the pigeons which are or were kept in them furnishing a valuable supply of manure for melon growing, one of the principal industries of the district.

We rode into the city up the great avenue where up to a few years before, fine trees had stood on each side of a long central watercourse. Owing to unbelievable vandalism, some Persian notable, anxious to make a few hundred *tomauns*, had cut them all down. Nothing but lines of melancholy stumps remained, a most lamentable spectacle.

We were both quartered in the suburb of Julfa, populated by Armenians whose ancestors were moved here by the great Shah Abbass. That enlightened monarch, the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, was very favourable to Europeans; nevertheless, he was obliged to consent to the execution of his favourite Swiss watchmaker, Rodolphe, whose tomb inscribed "*Ci gît Rodolphe*," was still to be seen at Julfa. It was Rodolphe's devotion to the fair sex which caused his untimely end, the Persian Mahometans viewing any tampering with their women with extreme disfavour.

At Julfa I stayed with a Scotsman engaged in the carpet business. He was a charming fellow and a most hospitable host.

His house, which had once belonged to a wealthy Armenian, was embellished with some quaint old paintings, the carpets were beautiful, the rooms comfortable, and the cooking good.

Many a quaint tale of life in Ispahan did I hear sitting after dinner in the pleasant evenings, meeting among other interesting characters, a wandering European professor who declared that great mineral deposits lay in the mountains close by. His researches, however, had been impeded by the peasants, who objected to digging as likely to arouse the ire of the *deeves* or demons whom it was dangerous to disturb.

I explored Ispahan and saw with sorrow its fine old buildings falling into a sad state of disrepair, neglect and decay; the wonderful tiles, too, often broken or missing. On all sides were evidences of the twilight into which the once great Persian Empire had for years been sinking, but enough remained to show what a magnificent city Ispahan, full of palatial buildings, standing in lovely and spacious gardens, must have formerly been.

Little care seemed to be taken to preserve historical relics of a stately past; nevertheless, some remained. Especially curious was the old bridge built in the seventeenth century by Portuguese engineers. At each end of this were men who loaned out *kalian*s or waterpipes which were smoked by people crossing the river. They took it from a man at one end and handed it to his partner at the other.

I saw also the great *Maidan*, one of the largest squares in the world, two thousand feet long and seven hundred feet broad, a magnificent open space, flanked by various buildings, including the palace of Chihil Situn (forty pillars) and its garden, a fine relic of the ancient Kings of Persia, which I am glad to hear has since been carefully restored.

Here polo, which originated in Persia, was once played. Up to comparatively recent times, I was told, the remains of the goal posts had existed, but the modern Persians no longer played, while the very name of polo, once the game of Khans and kings, was forgotten.

Over the entrance to the chief Bazaar once stood the great Dutch clock with automatic figures, noted by Sir John Chardin,



Its place, however, had long been taken by the Nokhara-Khaneh or trumpet house, from which a roar of somewhat discordant music greeted the rising and saluted the setting sun, a custom which in my time also prevailed at Tehran, where the musicians were stationed on the eastern gate of the city.

Though for the most part in sorry repair many evidences of the past glories of the ancient capital remained, and it was not difficult to conjure up the great days of the past when the Court of the Sefavee Kings was accounted the most splendid in all the world. The ancient area of the city must have been very great. Large portions of it, however, had long been in ruins, while whole streets, which had once been full of life, were devoid of inhabitants.

Crumbling walls and roofless houses abounded on all sides, and, though the enormous extent of garden and buildings, extending to about thirty miles in circumference, conveyed an impression of a huge capital, in reality scarcely a twentieth part of it was peopled, the million inhabitants of Sir John Chardin's time having shrunk to something like a paltry forty thousand.

The Armenian suburb of Julfa where I stayed was known to have contained about thirty thousand souls in the seventeenth century. At the time of my visit the population had shrunk to some three hundred families, while of the thirteen ornate Christian churches which were once well maintained, only about half a dozen poorly kept edifices remained.

The Armenian, like the Persian population of Ispahan, began to decrease in number after the siege of the latter city by the Afghans.

From that epoch Persia has gone steadily downhill. The fall of the ancient capital, which in the Middle Ages had been a wonder city for all the world, was an event the effects of which, indeed, altered the course of history. As a result, the ancient line of Sefavee Kings disappeared, while Persia, which was at one time a most powerful country, gradually decreased in prestige as well as in extent.

To-day it is difficult to realize that the Shahs once ruled in Candahar and held sway over Georgia, the Prince of which



SALUTING THE RISING SUN



province, in theory at least, owed complete allegiance to the Persian monarch ruling in Ispahan.

The story of the Afghan incursion into Persia, as told by Father Krusinski, a Jesuit who was in that country at the time still makes fascinating reading. I purchased a copy of this book which I came across in Tehran and have read it several times with the greatest interest and pleasure.

The difficulties which the invaders had to overcome were enormous. Candahar, whence they started is some nine hundred miles from Ispahan as the crow flies and a great deal longer by the circuitous route which, owing to the arid nature of much of the country, the Afghans were obliged to take. The triumph of a comparatively small force of mounted horsemen so far away from their base, and their capture of the vast and powerful city of Ispahan, deserves to be ranked as one of the great military feats of history.

In Ispahan and the surrounding district at the time of my visit perfect order and tranquility prevailed. The Prince-Governor, feared, and in a certain way respected, ruled with an iron hand. Robbers, who before his coming had terrorized the countryside, had entirely disappeared. A certain number of them, caught red-handed, had been built, head downwards, into a wall, which made the rest think the business too risky.

Dishonest tradesmen and givers of short weight in the bazaar had one or both hands struck off and were then walked through the streets with a placard stating their misdeeds hung round their necks.

The Baktiaris, that powerful tribe which now plays a considerable part in ruling Persia, then confined themselves entirely to their mountain fastnesses, not far away from the city.

Occasionally one met blue-coated, heavily-armed, mounted tribesmen, escorting women, or guarding corpses going to be buried at a sacred place, otherwise, these hardy mountaineers kept entirely apart.

A certain number of Baktiari chiefs, however, always resided at Tehran, the idea being that they were hostages for the good behaviour of their people, of whom the Persians stood in considerable awe. Now and then conferences would be held, in

the course of which some Persian notable or Baktiari chieftain would lose his life.

The Baktiaris were exceedingly suspicious of Persian duplicity and always required substantial guarantees for their safety before coming into towns.

Only a short time before my visit to Ispahan a powerful Baktiari who, with a number of tribesmen, looked like giving trouble, had, after the most solemn promises and oaths on the Koran, been induced to pay a visit to that city. For two days he was accorded an almost royal welcome, a review of troops being held in his honour while all sorts of entertainments passed the time joyfully way. On the evening of the third day, when he had retired to rest, after a sumptuous banquet, he was suddenly told that his suite was under lock and key and that, to the great regret of his hosts, the moment had arrived when he must die. The choice of how this was to happen being left to him, he opened a vein while in a hot bath, after which his followers ceased to cause the Persians any further uneasiness.

Since those days the Baktiaris, having come down from the hills, take part in Persian public affairs. To-day, Ispahan, as well as other rich governorships, are allotted to chiefs and leaders of these tribesmen. The feudal democrats in question, now that they have descended into the cities, fully equal the Persians in rapacity.

A certain chief bitterly complained of being treated less generously than a brother Khan, who, having been given a richer governorship, was able to make more out of it.

At the time of our visit the Governor of Ispahan was the *Zil es Sultan* (shadow of the king), the eldest son of the old Shah, though, owing to his mother not having been a princess, not the heir to the throne. The *Zil*, nevertheless, had a good deal of power, and was reputed to be a man of boundless ambition. In addition to this, he was supposed to have strong British sympathies.

His younger brother, the *Vehliat* or Crown Prince, who was Governor of Tabriz, was, on the other hand, said to be more or less under the influence of Russia. By way of causing him to regard England in a favourable light, at Sir Henry's suggestion, Mr. Fairfax Cartwright had a short time before been sent on a

mission to the prince at Tabriz, bearing with him a complete set of silver-plated band instruments, a present from Queen Victoria, with which the *Vehliat* expressed himself highly pleased.

As a matter of fact, when the latter did come to the throne he showed no particular partiality for Russians or Russia. In all probability, like most Persians of that generation, both the *Zil* and the *Vehliat* had little real affection for either of the two great Powers, only wanting one thing, which was to be let alone.

After a few days at Ispahan, the *Zil* sent word to Major Law that on a certain day he would be pleased to accord him an interview.

Accordingly, in due course, we found ourselves entering his Palace of Chihil Situn which, as has been said, was one of the few remaining vestiges of old Ispahan still in tolerable condition.

In the days of the Sefavee Kings it must have been a magnificent building, even as it was, the large apartment into which we were shown was of fine and imposing appearance. We were accompanied by an Armenian interpreter, by whom we were presented to the *Zil*. The latter was dressed in semi-Persian clothes, and wore dark trousers with a gold stripe and patent leather boots.

After having given us cigarettes out of a European case, probably sent from Bond Street, and coffee out of the small egg-shaped cups usual in Persia, he began a conversation. Courteous enquiries as to age, health, opinion of his country, protestations of friendship to England and admiration for its great Queen were followed by artfully designed questions as to exactly why such a great man as Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had suddenly been sent out to Persia?

Major Law, having returned suitable answers, proceeded to try and turn the conversation on to the subject of trade, which indeed was the reason of his visit. He talked of yarns, cotton prints, Manchester goods, Sheffield cutlery and other products of British industry and enterprise.

The *Zil*, while taking care to express how hard he was trying to make his citizens appreciate English goods, evidently thought the subject rather a boring one.

A gardener, leading a domesticated "wild sheep," with gigantic horns, happening to appear in the charming garden outside, the *Zil* pointed in his direction while addressing the interpreter.

"His Highness," said the latter, "enquires if you are interested in sheep?"

"Certainly I am," said Major Law.

"His Highness," continued the interpreter, "says it will interest you to know that this is a very prolific sheep—in his opinion the different breeds of sheep and goats, their life and ways are well worth studying. He begs me to add that it has been a great pleasure for him to see you. The audience is now at an end."

The *Zil* then suddenly produced from nowhere two signed photos of himself and two magnificent roses, gave them to us, shook hands and vanished.

Major Law was never able to obtain another audience and so, as far as the Prince Governor was concerned, the commercial mission could not be said to have effected any particular good.

A certain amount of information useful for commercial purposes was, however, acquired in less exalted quarters, and on the whole Major Law returned to Tehran satisfied with the results of his journey.

At the Legation the time passed pleasantly enough. Sir Henry entertained freely and there was plenty of riding and tennis. I also did a good deal of work. To begin with my mornings were passed in the Chancery in addition to which there were Sir Henry's private letters to attend to, and when anything important was afoot, a great amount of cyphering and decyphering to be done. The typewriter had not yet come into use and everything had to be written by hand.

In addition to routine work, three copies of all dispatches had to be prepared. One went to the Foreign Office, one was kept in the archives of the Legation, and a third sent to the Viceroy of India. Altogether I had little time to be bored and never felt inclined to grumble at the dullness of life in Tehran, as so many of the old residents there were apt to do.

When not otherwise occupied, I would go round the bazaars or inspect the wares of the carpet merchant and antiquity vendors who were always seeking admission at the Legation gate. I made a fair number of purchases but rarely came across anything really good. The finest things were difficult to get and usually only produced for the edification of old and well-known clients.

Picturesque incidents occasionally varied our existence. I remember an old Kurdish chief with an escort of heavily armed horsemen riding into the Legation grounds to have an audience of Sir Henry. Typically Oriental in appearance and dress, he was an aged man, though not so aged as he looked. With him was his little grandson, a richly-dressed boy of about nine who, in addition to a dagger and sword, had a couple of the most up-to-date revolvers stuck in his belt.

The object of the old chief's journey to the British Legation, was to make enquiries as to the education of this boy, who for some reason or other he was desirous of sending to Harrow.

After coffee and a few pulls at a *kalian* or water-pipe, he discussed the question through an interpreter with our Minister. The latter promised to arrange matters in a satisfactory way, and after countless compliments and expressions of thanks, the wild-looking horsemen with the old chief and the boy at their head, rode away.

I have often wondered whether this youth with his belt full of deadly weapons ever became a schoolboy at peaceful Harrow-on-the-Hill.

It was, however, not uncommon to find Persians or even tribesmen who had had a European education. I cannot, however, say that their sojourn at Western seats of learning seemed to have done them any particular good. A partiality for spats and European dress, together with some Western vices, added to their own fairly abundant native stock, are, it is to be feared, too often the chief results of such exotic training.

Though, as I have said, we did not play polo, a great part of our time was passed in the saddle. Horses were then very cheap and a considerable number were kept in the Legation. Smaller



than European horses and seldom possessed of glossy coats, Arabs, Turkomans and crosses between the two exhibited enormous endurance.

They never seemed to be frisky. The Persians, who were rather brutal as concerns animals, did not understand a horse kicking up its heels or trying to unseat its rider. I fancy that when they came across any intractable animal they tied it up and threw things at it till the poor animal was thoroughly cowed.

According to our ideas they were wretched horse-masters—sore backs which might have been obviated being more the rule than the exception. In the stable their horses were always smothered in rugs, while every hole and cranny was plugged so as to keep the interior as hot and stuffy as possible. This, the grooms maintained, was the only proper way to keep horses. Nothing would induce them to alter their methods. In common fairness it should be added that in every case where people tried to keep Persian horses in the European way, the result was immediate and absolute failure.

Whenever I wanted to go out riding I could do so, as Sir Henry had most kindly placed all the horses in the Legation stables at my disposal. I did not, of course, use them for journeys, when it was my practice to ride post, but I made many pleasant excursions in the neighbourhood of Tehran.

A frequent companion of my rides was a pleasant young Irishman, Mr. Guinness, who was attached to our Consular Department. He was a capital judge of horseflesh and, like so many of his countrymen, had a peculiar knack of hunting out useful animals if any sport was afoot.

The Shah at one time used to hold races near Tehran, but as the main excitement consisted in speculating on the fate of any Persian owner who might have been bold enough or unfortunate enough to beat His Majesty, the proceedings were apt to be tame.

Satiated with victory, the King of Kings eventually lost all interest in the Persian Turf, and as there were none of his subjects who presumed to organize a meeting on their own account, racing had ceased to exist.

The European residents and secretaries of the various Legations one day, however, determined to organize races on their own account. A straight course was chosen near Kasr-i-Kadjar, a Royal Palace not far from Tehran, and all details having been arranged, the date of the meeting was fixed.

The principal event was a race open to the diplomats of all nations—catch weights on a more or less straight mile on the flat.

Guinness told me he had his eye upon an Arab with which he felt certain he could win it, but being a heavy man he would much like me to act as his jockey. I told him I had no confidence in my own powers. As, however, he insisted, we took the Arab out for a trial which confirmed him in his high opinion of its merits.

It was a white horse which looked nothing at all till it got into a gallop. I rode him several times and realized that Guinness was right about its extraordinary speed. When people heard I was going to ride, there was a good deal of chaff, for as Guinness had anticipated, it was generally assumed that I had routed out some old horse as a joke.

Both he and I got good odds about the horse and after it had appeared on the course, rather badly groomed and looking somewhat broken down, we got better odds than ever. Guinness backed it to win him a substantial sum, while I stood to win about two hundred pounds.

Silk jackets and caps not being procurable in Tehran, jockeys rode in any distinctive kit they could get. A Turk, I remember, rode in a fez—as for me, the chocolate and yellow shirt of the Cambridge polo club was distinctive enough.

Riding strictly to orders, I soon took the lead of a rather large field. Gaining at every stride, I eventually got the old Arab, which behaved nobly, first past the post an easy winner by four lengths.

This, I believe, was the first European race meeting ever held in Persia. The scene was curious in the extreme, a great part of the course being lined by dervishes who, having reaped a good harvest of alms from the spectators, took a keen and delighted interest in the proceedings.

Poor Guinness! A most promising young man who had been trained as a student interpreter in Constantinople, there was

every reason to believe that he would have a successful career in the East. He and I once planned a journey to Seistan, but it was not to be—I little thought when I left Persia I was never to see him again. During a journey in Khorassan, he was struck down by typhoid fever and lies in a distant grave on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

*"L'appétit vient en mangeant,"* and my journey to Ispahan having given me a liking for the glorious views and freedom of life on the road or rather on the desert, I obtained leave to make a trip to Meshed, rather more than five hundred and sixty miles distant.

This city, the capital of Khorassan, situated on the confines of Persia (about a day's journey on one side is the Russian, province of Transcaspia, about the same distance on the other, Afghanistan) is almost as sacred to the Shiahhs as Mecca to the Sunnis. Corpses from all parts of Persia are sent there to rest in holy ground, a mosque being dedicated to the Imam Reza.

The fame of Meshed as a place of pilgrimage had been astutely increased by the great Shah Abbass who, perceiving that pilgrimages carried a vast number of his subjects' gold to Mecca and Medina, sought to divert the devotion of the Persians to a shrine which would keep the money pilgrims spent at home.

At the time of my visit, owing to the holy character of the place, Christians were scarcely tolerated within the walls.

England, however, was represented by Major General Maclean, the Viceroy of India's Agent on the Perso-Afghan frontier, who, in 1889, was after some difficulty appointed Consul-General with a residence and staff in Meshed itself.

The British Consulate-General, it should be added, was established because the Russians had succeeded in being allowed to have one. General Maclean, indeed, was a sort of sentinel watching over English interests and keeping an eye upon Russian machinations in that wild part of the world.

In due course I set out on my journey, my sole companion being Nadir Ali Khan, the *gholam* who had gone with Major Law and I to Ispahan. He was an Afghan who had served in the Indian Army, was thoroughly reliable and spoke a little English.

Though the Afghans have the reputation of being fanatical Mussulmen, during the time we travelled together he did not, as far as I could see, say any prayers, or perform any of the rites laid down as obligatory upon those professing the Mahometan religion.

He was more careful, however, when any of his co-religionists were about, when he at once became a good Mussulman. On the whole he was an excellent man and not badly informed about the country through which we passed.

A curious couple, riding for days quite alone over the Persian desert, this Afghan and I! On leaving Tehran, for a time we made our way along a mountain ridge, from which could be seen one or two of the round walled enclosures in which the Guebres or fire-worshippers deposit their dead. These towers of silence are also used by the Parsees of India whose ancestors migrated from Persia rather than embrace the Mussulman faith.

The Persian fire-worshippers are law-abiding, gentle folk, expert at gardening, which is practically their sole profession. Considering that the followers of Zoroaster at one time dominated Persia, very few relics of fire-worship remain. I have, however, visited a ruined building or two, described to me as having, in remote ages, been part of a temple. Another relic of fire worship existent in my time was that the rising and setting sun was officially saluted in Tehran and other large towns by special musicians playing weird music, which very ancient usage was said to be of Zoroastrian origin.

My journey to Meshed, like that to Ispahan, was done by *chapar* and I followed the same route as had been taken by Dr. Joseph Wolff on his celebrated expedition to Bokhara. Stages on this road varied from sixteen to as much as thirty miles, a long distance for rough little horses of wretched appearance to go.

Nevertheless they performed their tasks quite satisfactorily. Ill-kept, ill-fed, and none too well treated, the lot of such poor animals is or was a very sad one.

The longest distance ever ridden on these post horses in one day was, I believe, one hundred and forty six miles, the rider being the late Sir Henry Rawlinson, father of the General. A

Secretary of our Legation, Mr. Bax-Ironside, rode one hundred and thirty miles in the same time. The distance I used to ride was about eighty miles a day, but I have done one hundred.

The post houses or *chapar khanehs* consisted of four high square, sun-dried mud, walls with flat roofs surmounted by battlements and flanked by four towers, as a defence against Turkoman raiders. Within was an open yard full of filth and manure.

The best accommodation was to be found on the upper floor or *bala khaneh*, from which the English word balcony is derived. The rooms both above and below were quite empty, devoid of furniture or carpet, the windows unglazed, and the doors very faulty. With rugs and a sleeping bag the traveller could, nevertheless, make himself comfortable.

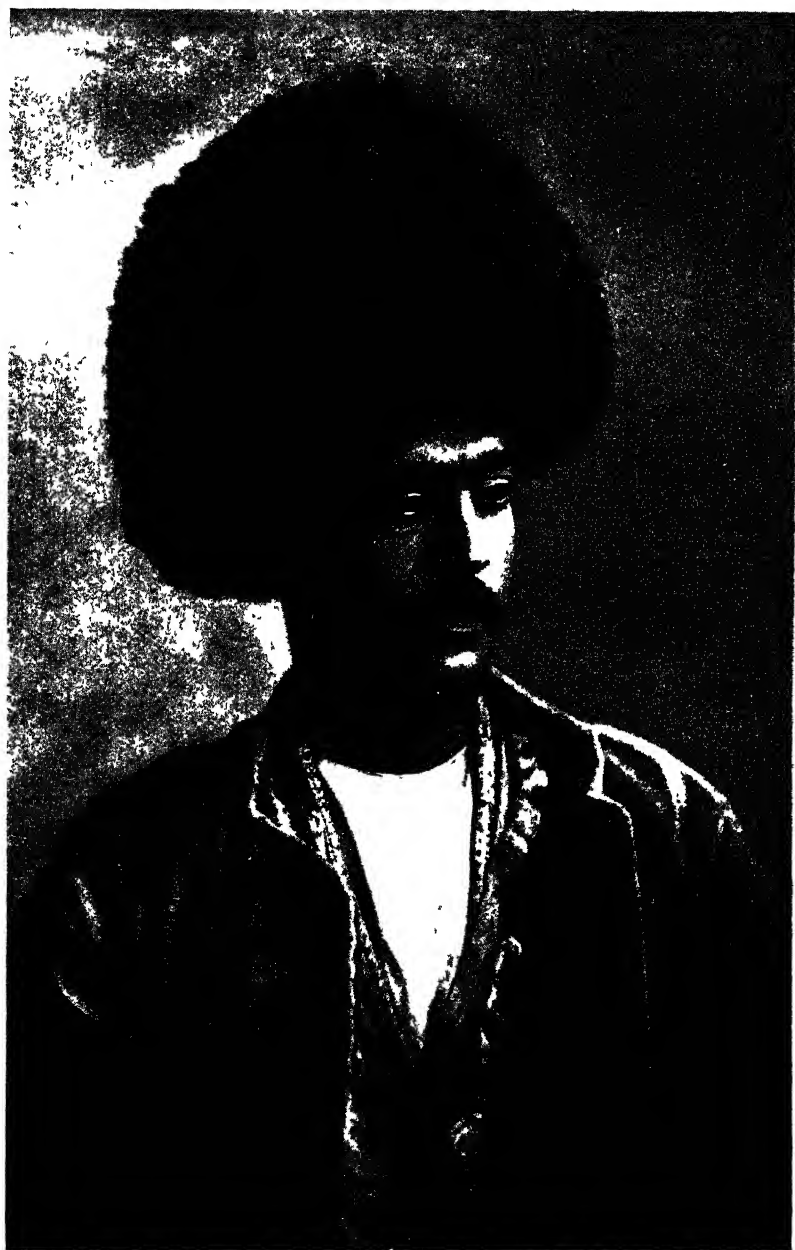
In the course of my journey I passed through Damgham, considered by the Persians the most ancient city in the world after Balkh, and also Subzawar, where Tamerlane built a tower of the skulls of men whom he had slain in battle. I also stayed on my way at Nishapur, noted for its extreme antiquity, its turquoises and its connection with Omar Khayyám who is buried there. The Persians, however, do not hold this poet in high esteem, the agnostic tendencies of his philosophy being repugnant to devout Mahometans. Nishapur was not attractive to them and my *gholam* told me it had a bad reputation.

During this journey I found the revolver that every traveller in Persia carried, extremely useful. Often at night we found the gates of villages shut and by firing shots in the air I would rouse the custodians, who, after a little parleying, let us in.

In one place the ground in front of us swarmed with a kind of large partridge or sand-grouse. I killed one or two which Nadir Ali Khan cooked in hot ashes, feathers and all; I never tasted anything more delicious in London or Paris.

As we neared Meshed, Turkoman towers, fast falling into decay, began to appear, but a few years before they had been much appreciated as refuges during raids.

Before the capture of Geok Tepe in 1881, the Persian farmer or husbandman in these parts, went about his work with a gun slung on his back and at the alarm of raiders would make for



A TURKOMAN



the nearest tower, there to secrete himself till the Turkoman horde had swept by, carrying away to their fastnesses besides spoil, men, women and children, to become their slaves. The distances which these tribesmen could cover on their wiry little horses were enormous; once away, it was almost impossible to overtake them. The Turkomans, besides being adepts at making raids, had their own peculiar strategy when confronted by an enemy who looked like making an effective fight.

The late Sir Condie Stephen, a charming and gifted diplomatist most unfortunately struck down in his prime, told me that while on the Afghan Boundary Commission, his party, consisting of three or four Europeans and some Persian *sowars*, suddenly saw a party of these raiding tribesmen approaching with hostile intent. By Sir Condie's orders men and horses took shelter in an old Persian fort from which shots were fired at the Turkomans. After a saddle or two had been emptied, the wild looking tribesmen began to ride away, upon which the Persians who had only been persuaded to show fight by the determination of the Europeans, gradually grew very bold. The further the Turkomans got from the fort, the braver the Persians became, and finally a score or so, in spite of advice to the contrary, having mounted their horses set out in pursuit.

From the fort the Turkomans could be seen disappearing in the distance with the Persians gradually drawing up to them. All of a sudden, however, the raiders wheeled round and making a fierce attack with their swords, the pursuers becoming the pursued, made off at top speed.

The Turkomans followed till within range of the fort, but then, in face of more rifle fire, again beat a retreat. Some of the Persians had been killed and others wounded, one of the latter, Sir Condie said, being brought into the fort with his nose almost severed by a sword cut. Although it seemed hopeless to save it, Sir Condie stuck it on with plaster as well as he could, and when his party moved, left the wounded man in a village. Passing that way some months later he was surprised to hear that his amateur surgery had been completely successful, the nose having healed, which, no doubt, was owing to the great purity of the air.



The tactics of the Turkomans in luring the Persians on by a pretended retreat were highly characteristic of their method of fighting. Though they carried rifles, the sword was a favourite Turkoman weapon. During the Russian attack on Geok Tepe, several sorties were made by tribesmen who strove to hack their way through the besiegers.

I regretted not being able to visit the fortress in which the Akhal Tekkes, forty thousand men, women and children had made their last stand against General Skobelev. For some time they held the Russians at bay, then through two breaches made in the walls by artillery, the Czar's infantry managed to effect an entrance.

For three days, it is said, the victorious soldiery were allowed to do as they pleased, an enormous number of Turkomans being put to the sword. The spirit of the tribesmen was henceforth broken, and in 1888 the Persians were beginning to forget the wild raiders who had carried off children and waylaid caravans.

At the time of my visit to the Turkoman country, the Russians were gradually forming the tribesmen, whom they had subdued, into regular cavalry, and as they let them keep their own customs, horses and dress, besides giving them pay, were meeting with a fair measure of success.

In Meshed I saw and talked to a number of Turkomans—fine, fierce-looking men who had taken part in raids, they still retained their huge sheep-skin caps and long silken robes.

It may be added that since the Russian revolution and Bolshevik domination of Bokhara, the Turkomans have once more begun raiding. Of late they have given a great deal of trouble, and a short time ago the Persian Government sent an army against them. Whether the force in question will succeed in checking the lawless forays of tribesmen who are no longer in fear of Russia, seems doubtful.

During certain stages the track to Meshed skirted the great salt desert of Persia, which lay not very far away on the right. Any rider straying away into this desert, or *kevir*, as the Persians call it, is doomed to an almost certain death. Mirages lure him farther and farther afield into its recesses, till, hopelessly lost, he and his exhausted steed lie down to die.

A Persian legend tells of the "Spirit of the *Kevir*," a beautiful female figure who appears to travellers, and, beckoning them to follow, leads them to a terrible death by thirst and starvation in the desert wastes.

The mirages which the traveller sees in Persia are certainly wonderful. Often a beautiful lake suddenly appears, apparently not very far away. When, however, one reaches the spot where it has been located, only vast stretches of desert meet the eye.

Another mirage is that picturing a city, the houses and mosques of which can be clearly discerned. The gilded or tiled roofs of the latter often seem positively to sparkle in the sun. Everything, however, vanishes into thin air on an approach to the confines of such phantom cities.

It must be understood that owing to the great clearness of the atmosphere in Persia one is able to see what seems an incredible distance to those unacquainted with the country. Riding over the flat desert it is not uncommon to perceive houses and other fair-sized objects nine, ten and even eleven miles ahead.

It may be added that the Persian post-boy always minimizes the distance which has to be traversed, framing the answer to a question in such a manner as he thinks will be agreeable to the enquirer.

Among maxims which are popular in Persia, the dictum of the poet Sadi, "that an acceptable lie is better than an unpalatable truth," is by far the most popular.

Besides the curious charm of the desert, varied by lofty mountains, there was much of interest connected with a journey from one Persian town or village to another—Dervishes almost exactly corresponding to the begging friars of mediæval times, wandering from place to place telling stories by the road-side, or in caravanserais, while receiving alms in a sort of carved wooden shell or other receptacle which all of them carried.—Picturesque caravans, with long lines of camels striding in single file over the arid plains of the desert—A Prince Governor on the march with his retinue and women, the latter carried in closed litters or large covered panniers slung upon mules with fierce-eyed horsemen as an escort. Here and there I came

across Persians whose dress and equipment belonged to a more picturesque age. Such a one was the old Khan in stately old-world garb with hawk on wrist riding out with an armed retainer to get some sport in the mountains.

Most travellers in districts remote from the capital carried rifles; in the early days of the telegraph considerable trouble was caused by a habit they had of shooting at insulators, which formed an attractive mark.

Dotted here and there one would see clusters of little black tents denoting an encampment of Iliols or other nomadic tribes who move about seeking pasture for their flocks.

Small Persian towns and villages, though usually more or less in ruins, sometimes contained buildings and mosques faced with tiles of great beauty.

As a rule a large proportion of the inhabitants of Persian villages, though of necessity leading more or less an out-door life, had the appearance of being in bad health, and the European traveller used frequently to be asked for medicines, any of which were much appreciated. Fever was rampant in most places; no doubt it was the result of some insect's bite, though when I was in Persia such an idea had not entered anyone's head.

With a view to combating this malaria, the Persians were very fond of taking opium pills, which reduced their vitality and injured their health. This habit, combined with complete ignorance of the laws of sanitation, seems to have weakened the race, which, to judge from the number of ruined villages, must have been vastly more prolific in the days when the great Shah Abbass held his court in Ispahan, at which time a number of such villages are known to have been well populated.

Nothing is more striking than to pass through long lines of ruined buildings and skeleton houses at night. In many cases the downfall of a village is due entirely to carelessness or neglect connected with its water supply. When the canals and underground channels conveying the water get out of order, the Persians, rather than trouble about repairs, not infrequently prefer to build afresh on an entirely new site.

As a matter of fact, living in old houses is not popular in Persia, where a rich man seldom resides in the same abode which sheltered his father. Not that he troubles to pull the

paternal mansion down. He simply lets it go to ruin, and builds a new house somewhere else.

The villagers whom I saw during my halts, though for the most part quiet, submissive people, were quite capable of fierce fanaticism where their religion was concerned. An absolute and unwavering faith, together with a love of contemplation which the western world would consider mere waste of time, seemed to console them for the poverty and oppression which dogged the majority from their birth.

Though at heart distrustful of Europeans, they were not devoid of the courtesy which was a characteristic of ancient Persia.

Their curiosity, however, as to why I wore an eyeglass—"a window in the eye," as they called it, they could rarely conceal.

Also they not infrequently enquired when the Great War was coming off? This enquiry referred to a contest between England and Russia which many Persians believed to be inevitable. As far as I could make out, the chances of victory seemed to them about equal. England, they said, had much money, but then against that Russia had many soldiers.

"Allah would decide!"

On my arrival at Meshed I made my way to the British Agency where a nice bedroom and hot bath produced that delightful feeling of comfort which is only known to those who have ridden for eight or nine days on end.

Sir John Maclean was absent, but his staff, which included Mr. Ringler Thompson, the Nawab, (a Persian in the English service) and an English doctor, gave me the heartiest of welcomes and an excellent dinner, washed down by the best of Persian wine. The meal ended, we had some music which was furnished by a sort of barrel organ with perforated circles of paper put in it to produce various tunes. We all ground it in turn and, simple as such a form of entertainment sounds, out in this Persian city, far away from European civilization, we passed a very jolly evening.

During the next few days I was shown Meshed, but not the interior of the mosques, as at that time the people of the Holy City resented any European entering their places of worship.

A number of *dellals*, as dealers in carpets and antiquities are called in Persia, came to show me their wares and I secured a few good Turkoman rugs and a Turkoman woman's wedding robe—a curiosity which is, I believe, rare. The *dellals* in question, all over Persia are for the most part Jews. Civil and pleasant men, oddly enough they were far less Semitic in appearance than the Persians amongst whom they lived and by whom they had at times been sadly persecuted.

I was introduced to various notables, Turkomans and others, and also went for rides in the outskirts, witnessing, among other things, a camel fight which I was told was a favourite sport in this part of Persia.

The one I saw was neither exciting nor cruel. The camels seemed exceedingly unwilling to come near one another, and when persuaded to do so, absolutely declined to attack. The Turkomans who managed the affair were depressed at the poor results shown, however, I told them that as far as I was concerned I was quite satisfied, which, together with the gift of some *tomauns*, had the effect of putting them in a good temper.

In due course, having exhausted the sights of Meshed, which seemed to me an abominably dirty town, I bade farewell to my English hosts and with the faithful Nadir Ali Khan, set out on my return journey to Tehran, where, after about ten days in the saddle, I arrived in excellent health and first class spirits.

During the winter of 1888 I went on another journey, this time to Hamadan, the ancient Ecbatana, where is the tomb of Esther and Mordecai. As before, I rode post and was accompanied by the same *gholam*. It was terribly cold and deep snow lay on the ground, indeed, so much snow that I had to abandon my original intention of pushing on to Kermanshah.

Two or three stages out from Tehran the cold was so bitter that on the advice of the *gholam* I took my sleeping bag into the stable of the post house, where I slept. Here, amidst the horses, some muleteers and men in charge of a caravan had made a fire, round which they sat telling stories most of the night. The picturesque appearance of these men and their gestures while speaking, vividly recalled the *Arabian Nights*,

while giving a good illustration of how the tales in that book had been handed on from generation to generation.

Early in the morning the saddling of the horses and mules and the tinkling of the caravan bells woke me up to be the witness of as typical an oriental scene as it was possible to imagine.

I may add that in spite of the fact of my being a European infidel, these people, rough as they were, showed me the greatest courtesy.

Making our way over snow-bound mountain tracks, we eventually reached Hamadan, where I was made welcome by an American missionary, one of a number who made that city their headquarters. He and his wife, like many missionary workers, had come to Persia from the States full of enthusiasm and hope that their efforts would draw a large number of Persians into the Christian fold. As a matter of fact, depressing as it might seem to mission workers, the conversion of Mahometans, besides being viewed with fierce intolerance by the authorities, practically never occurred.

The Persians, who are Shiahs, and apt to be more fanatical than the Sunnis, while already acquainted with the main tenets of the Christian religion, and looking upon Christ as a great prophet, are not at all accessible to propaganda which seeks to discredit their own great prophet, Mahomet, and his successor, Ali, whom they hold in high veneration.

In consequence of this, the only people with whom the missionaries can seriously deal are the Armenians who, already Christians, are often quite willing for their children to be educated, provided some material benefits fall to their parents. As a general rule you can convert as many Armenians as you please, provided you are ready to pay the regulation price.

My missionary host did not wear clerical costume, being dressed in an ordinary lounge suit. The one thing about him which struck me as being highly original was a smoking cap with tassel, which it was his practice to wear indoors and out. I rather think that this is the only individual I ever saw wearing a smoking cap at all. Where he got the idea from I cannot imagine?

Except in farces, such as the late Charles Matthews played in, such a covering is rarely seen even on the stage. I do not believe

that the wearer had any idea of the name of his headgear, for to him tobacco was an evil thing, and smoking an abomination. He was a married man without children, a fact which may have accounted for a certain depression from which both he and his wife seemed to suffer.

American married missionaries in Persia are, or were, paid salaries which grew larger with the birth of each successive child. This system of payment by results, as a cynic rather roughly called it, did not benefit my hosts who, having no children, had nothing to think about but the conversion of Persia to Christianity, a long wished for event, which the lady believed to be imminent.

This subject indeed, which lay very near her heart, formed the main topic of our conversation at meals, though I must confess, that I could not pretend to share the optimism which animated the rest of the party.

With every desire to be just as regards missionaries in Oriental countries it is doubtful if their zeal and self-sacrifice produces satisfactory results. Too often, as the ever-to-be-regretted Sir Mark Sykes said, the religion born of the Reformation and reared in lands of machinery and science becomes a grotesque cant when thrust upon an Asiatic Christian.

The outward symptoms of a "conversion" in the East, said he, were usually American spring-sided boots and ugly European clothes; the final stage that in which the victim, hating his teacher and ashamed of his parentage and nationality, became extremely miserable. "He scorns his old creed because it is old, and follows that of the missionary because he admires the well-made boots and furniture of the latter."

At the missionary's house, I was given a very comfortable bedroom, in which, after having slept for nights in post-houses and caravanserais, I fully appreciated the joys of spotless sheets and a comfortable bed.

The food, though plain, was excellent. Alcohol was not allowed in the house, but now and then I would walk round to the stables and get a nip of cherry brandy out of the flask attached to my saddle.

A more serious deprivation was the lack of tobacco, my host absolutely prohibiting smoking within his house, or even in his

garden. Considering the very generous hospitality shown to me, I did not like to upset his susceptibilities in this direction, so confined myself to taking an occasional whiff in the town outside.

I was taken to see the famous tomb which was not kept in such good repair as the memory of Esther and Mordecai deserved, the bazaars and other features of Hamadan, but the city did not seem to me of any absorbing interest, nor was the society of male and female missionaries, into which I was introduced by my host, particularly exciting.

At home we had an enormous amount of prayers, indeed, it seemed to me that whenever nothing else was doing, it was the practice to ring the bell, when a horde of Armenian children would flock in and go through a form of short service, terminated by a somewhat depressing hymn.

In compliance with a request, I went to see these children at their school and, after asking them a certain number of questions, duly expressed myself as impressed with the high state of efficiency which their answers implied.

At Hamadan I saw a few merchants who still wore the high old-fashioned *kola*, or black lambswool cap, with angular top which had been the national headgear up to the time of the Shah's return from his first voyage to Europe. He then caused a lower and less picturesque form of *kola* to be adopted. This, I regret to say, is in its turn now being replaced by a black cap often of cloth not higher than a fez which, sad to relate, is even worn by Persian court officials at State functions instead of the artistic "shawl draped *kola*" which was still part of court dress in the time of Nasr-ed-Din.

The shawl robe, I believe, survives in a modified form but that too is probably doomed to give way to European evening dress or modern uniform of hideous design. All this is but another instance of how contact with Western civilization tends to vulgarize the East.

In due course having exhausted the attractions of Hamadan, I prepared to depart, and after bidding a grateful farewell to my hosts, once more rode away, and after a somewhat cold journey, in due course found myself safe within the Legation gates.



The last *chapar* journey I set out upon was to Yezd and Kerman. On the road, however, I was seized with fever, the only time I ever suffered from it. The attack in question I attribute to having been bitten by some mosquito or fly, though I am unaware whether scientifically this is supposed to be one of the causes of Persian fever.

It was very hot and having a great distance to go, I attempted to travel during part of the day as well as by night. Owing to the heat I discarded everything except my *terrai* hat and breeches and boots, with the result that I afforded a glorious and easy field for the operations of insects, which the latter, though I felt no bite, must have taken advantage of.

Scarcely able to sit on a horse I spent a couple of days and nights in a wretched *chapar khaneh* or rest-house, from which I eventually managed to struggle on to the hospitable residence of an English telegraph official in the sacred city of Kum. Here I was made most comfortable and heavily dosed with quinine, during which time I amused myself reading Burton's *Arabian Nights* which my host placed at my disposal.

"However did you come to get this book," I enquired. "I should hardly have thought it worth your while to pay a large price to get such volumes out here?"

"Well," said he, "as a matter of fact the book cost me very little, for a Prince Governor who has a palace not far away, having somehow or other heard that a great fuss had been made about the indecency of a new edition of the *Arabian Nights*, immediately sent to London for it."

"When the volumes arrived he set about looking for pictures of a doubtful kind but having to his great disgust found that there were no illustrations at all, he forthwith had all the volumes thrown over the palace walls into the roadway outside. A Persian who knew my fondness for books picked them up, and after a certain amount of bargaining they passed into my possession."

Though after three or four days sojourn beneath a hospitable roof I felt sufficiently restored to health to continue my journey my host who was a bit of a doctor and well acquainted with the effects of Persian fever, strongly advised me to abandon all attempts to reach Yezd and Kerman and return to Tehran.



MASTER OF COURT CEREMONIES, 1888



Reluctantly following his advice I slowly wended my way back—the last *chapar* journey as it turned out I was ever to take.

Since those days I have been in many countries but none of them ever seemed to me to offer anything so picturesque as the experiences of the Persian open road. The purple beauty of mountains seen from afar over the desert—the call of the *Muezzin* at sunset—the strange pathetic singing in Persian towns by night with its curious trilling imitation of the nightingale's note—the stately progress of a caravan and the tinkling of its bells at dawn—all this and much more are memories which the lapse of thirty-four years has been powerless to efface.



## CHAPTER VIII



## CHAPTER VIII

The Shah decides to visit Europe.—Arrangements for his reception in England.—Sir Henry and I leave Tehran.—The Sufeed Rud.—Our journey home.—Nasr-ed-Din arrives in London.—His suite.—Official functions.—Jewels and uniforms.—A fair Circassian in Liverpool.—The Shah's mascot.—A strange story.—Nasr-ed-Din visits some great provincial towns.—Persian contempt for Western civilization.—The Shah and country house life.—Visit to Osborne.—His audience of Queen Victoria.—Her great dignity.—Departure of the Shah.—His tragic end.—His home and foreign policies and their results.

**E**ARLY in 1889 it was announced that the Shah had decided on paying a third visit to Europe. His first journey outside Persia had taken place in 1872, when his arrival in England had created considerable excitement. In 1879, he went to see the Paris Exhibition, but to the relief of a good many people did not cross the channel.

Although the coming tour was supposed to have been the Shah's own idea, I have little doubt in my own mind but that it was in a great measure engineered by Sir Henry who, in spite of a fairly comprehensive knowledge of Oriental modes of thought, could not divest himself of a notion that the King of Kings was likely to be impressed by a visit to London.

To begin with, the monarch in question had been there once and no great increase of British influence or trade had been observed after his return to Persia. The finances of the country were by no means flourishing, and the royal journey to the Russian frontier meant an increase of poverty and misery to hundreds of wretched Persians in the towns and villages which lay along the Shah's route.

Retaining a good deal of the ancient state which was the appanage of the old Persian Kings, Nasr-ed-Din travelled with a huge retinue. The latter, together with camp followers and



soldiers like an army of locusts, devastated any district unlucky enough to find itself in their path.

This multitude of hangers-on, together with a great number of horses, had to be fed, in addition to which anything of value was liable to be seized "for use of the Shah." The monarch in question, who was humane enough according to his lights, no doubt, did all he could to prevent extortion and robbery. But he was an old man and his courtiers were cunning as well as rapacious, for which reason complaints, unless originating in high quarters, seldom reached his ears.

One or two people hinted all this to Sir Henry, but the details of the journey having been settled, there was nothing more to do but arrange for the Persian monarch's reception in England.

The news of the projected visit excited no enthusiasm at the Foreign Office, while Lord Salisbury, who was always most tolerant concerning Sir Henry's various schemes, merely expressed a qualified approval. As, however, Nasr-ed-Din was certainly coming to Europe, England could not be left out, and so various arrangements were made for the august visitor's entertainment.

Before the Shah's arrival, certain great firms connected with trade in Persia, were approached with a view to their contributing towards the cost of entertaining the royal guest. When the subject was first mooted, old Baron de Reuter who, at that time, was seriously interested in Persia, failed to make a suitable response, upon which it was pointed out to him that the Sassoons who, like himself, had important interests in the land of the Lion and the Sun, had donated a generous sum.

"I do not care," said he, "you may talk to me as you please, the Sassoons are snops."

"I am not a snop!"

"Snop" or not, the Baron eventually changed his views and drew a cheque for some five thousand pounds, in order to help give the King of Kings a suitable reception.

With Sir Henry, Mr. Fairfax Cartwright and Mr. Sidney Churchill, who arranged our journey, I started back to Europe from Tehran. The first part of the journey was done in old carriages which rattled along at quite a decent pace as far as Casvin, whence one had to ride over the mountains to Resht

which Sir Henry, with memories of the Kharzan Pass, particularly disliked.

While stopping for lunch at Rudbar, a pleasant spot full of olive trees on the banks of the Sufeed Rud, the Minister chanced to spy a rather derelict-looking flat-bottomed boat moored close against the shore. He at once set about making enquiries and the *Ketkodah*, or headman of the village, having been summoned, we proceeded to try and discover whether the Sufeed Rud was navigable or not.

The Persians, as a rule, delight in equivocation and will rarely give a direct answer to the most simple question. In addition to this, the old *Ketkodah*, a picturesque figure in a long robe, was rather frightened—hard experience having taught him that the less one had to do with influential travellers the better—consequently he was very elusive in his replies.

"Perhaps one could get to Enzeli by river, perhaps not, it would depend a good deal on the boat."

"Was a boat, which would hold our party, obtainable?"

"He was not sure."

If a good sum should be offered, did he think a boat and men to man it could be procured?

This cheered him up, and after further circumlocution he said it would depend a good deal on the sum. The river, in parts, was very dangerous for there were terrible rapids with which only skilled boatmen could deal and so on, and so on.

Having beat about the bush for a long time, a bargain was eventually struck, and an hour or so later a largish flat-bottomed boat with two men, made its appearance. The whole affair was very ramshackle in appearance and when the *Mira Khor*, or master of the horse, who had accompanied Sir Henry from the Legation, saw it he turned absolutely pea green.

Some discussion now ensued as to what was to be done about our luggage which we carried with us on mules, but eventually it was decided that we should take a bag or two in the boat while the remainder of the baggage would follow after, there being plenty of servants to see it wasn't stolen during the journey across the mountains. The *Mira Khor* would much have liked this task but as etiquette prescribed that he should remain with the Minister, he reluctantly took his place in the boat.

Sir Henry, whose vivacious mind delighted in novelty, was in high glee. In all probability we were the first Europeans who had ever gone from Rudbar to the coast by water, indeed I never heard of anyone having performed this journey before !

"When the Sufeed Rud shall have become a great commercial waterway," jokingly said Sir Henry, "we shall not be forgotten." He alone among our party was enthusiastic about the trip—the *Mira Khor* looked as if he was going to certain death.

My own idea was that Mr. Churchill, who had an exhaustive knowledge of Persia and the Persians, would never have allowed us to start had he not made certain that no particular danger was attached to the journey. He never said this, however, and took his seat in the boat with the air of Oriental resignation which he was able to assume at will.

The Sufeed Rud, or White River, is a fast flowing stream, very broad in some places, very narrow in others ; there was little necessity to row, indeed, directly we loosed off from the bank our frail vessel, carried by the current, glided away of its own accord.

All the boatmen had to do was to keep it straight with their poles. At one time we would shoot along like a rocket, at another lie almost stationary in a slowly flowing pool. There were lots of rapids, but the water where they occurred never seemed to be deep. The views on each side of the river were magnificent beyond anything I ever saw before or have ever seen since.

Mountains rising to a great altitude, wooded slopes and verdure which, to an eye used to the arid plains round Tehran, was delightful in the extreme. Between Rudbar and the spot where we landed, we saw not a single other boat, we were indeed the sole possessors of the beautiful river which, as far as I could make out, though deep enough in places, was, owing to its currents and shallows, never likely to be suitable for commercial navigation.

In the remote future, however, some use will doubtless be made of the Sufeed Rud in generating electric power for the purposes of which its swift flowing waters must be eminently adapted, while the beauty of the country through which it runs may not improbably attract some coming generation to build country residences upon its banks.

Our journey down the river did not take very long ; except for an occasional whirling round in pools succeeding rapids, there was nothing in the least disquieting about it. The only real *contretemps* was the loss of a *paté de foie gras* which I unluckily dropped overboard. Securely soldered up in its tin case at the bottom of the Sufeed Rud, the *paté* in question, if fished up, may prove of considerable interest to the archæological student of a remote generation.

In due course we reached a part of the river where the boatmen told us we could find means to be taken to Enzeli. On arrival there we had to wait a whole day for the steamer, meanwhile I shot some wild fowl, great flocks of which abounded in the district.

From Enzeli we went to Baku, and thence across the Caucasus to Batoum. Here we got on to a leisurely steamer which touched at several Black Sea ports and enabled us to visit Kertch, Yalta and the battlefields of Sebastopol.

At last we arrived at Odessa, whence, after a brief stay we went on by train through Lemberg, Cracow, and other Polish towns to Vienna which I found an amusing and agreeable city, the distractions of which were very welcome after life in Tehran.

There we remained some days, as we did at Brussels, where Sir Henry went to see King Leopold, after which we went on to the end of our journey—home.

The Honourable George Curzon (now Marquess Curzon of Kedleston) who was much interested in Eastern questions, was then contemplating a journey to Persia, and as he was desirous of becoming acquainted with the routes in that country, a meeting was arranged at which I gave him a detailed description of the road to Meshed, where I believe, he subsequently went.

As a result of his sojourn in Persia, Lord Curzon afterwards produced what is without doubt the most accurate and valuable volume dealing with the land of the Lion and the Sun. Unfortunately it has become extremely scarce, but it is to be hoped that another edition may someday see the light.

In July, 1889, the Shah and his suite came up the Thames in a torpedo boat on board of which were King Edward, then Prince of Wales, the Duke of Clarence, whom I had known at Cambridge, and the present King, then Duke of York, all of whom, in uniform with a brilliant suite, went to welcome the august visitor from

Persia. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff together with myself and several others, were also there.

I had met the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) at a luncheon party of my mother's a short time before, and with his usual thoughtfulness he talked to me of her in a most flattering way and also wrote a note which he bade me give to her when I got home again.

General Sir Arthur Ellis, who was in attendance, I also knew, and everything working like clockwork, the trip down the river was very pleasant indeed. We had an excellent lunch, after which, in due course, the Persians came on board, and were received with considerable ceremony.

The Shah's suite, to my great regret, had discarded their picturesque shawl robes, and were dressed in very ordinary gold-laced uniforms cut in the European style. The only exception was the *hakim*, or doctor, who wore shawls and a turban, his sole concession to Western ways being a pair of elastic-sided or jemima boots. Not at all impressed by any European country he visited, he viewed everything from a humorous point of view. Like another distinguished Mahometan, he appeared to be of the opinion that the wine of the infidel became turned to water in the mouth of the believer, for he never failed to drink as much of it as he was able to procure. He was a merry sort, and I soon made great friends with him ; some of the other Persians I already knew.

The journey up the river to the spot where we landed on the Embankment was rendered lively by the saluting sirens of all the vessels which we passed. On our arrival, the Persians were packed away in royal carriages and taken to Buckingham Palace. The first thing that my coachload asked me was where they could go and amuse themselves in the evening ? They had, it appeared, had a very lively time in St. Petersburg, and were anxious to know whether the girls of London were likely to be as free and easy as those they had met there, also, were there dancing places open all night ?

Considering that in Persia we had scarcely been allowed to glance at a Mahometan woman, I considered this rather a piece of impudence. I told them London was an austere city, the people of which would not tolerate foreigners being up to any

games with their women. They would, however, be fully occupied visiting factories and museums, where a complete knowledge of our Western civilization could best be acquired. At the palace I left them thoroughly depressed. This, however, did not prevent one of the Persians from going out and coming back at four in the morning, when, having tried to clamber over the railings, he was only saved from impaling himself by a very astonished sentry.

The next day began a programme of visits to distinguished personages, public institutions, theatres, music halls, and the Guildhall. There was a special performance at the Empire, and a gala night at the Opera, but I doubt if the old Shah enjoyed either very much. Everything, however, was beautifully done, the only jarring note being the Persian National Anthem, a most lugubrious tune of which everyone soon became sick and tired.

I fancy that the dirge in question was originally invented by one of the Shah's foreign bandmasters. They would have done better to have adapted a stirring march by some little known composer.

Oriental National Anthems are always of exotic origin. It is said that at the Durbar, at Agra, in February, 1907, in honour of the Ameer of Afghanistan, when the bandmasters were instructed to play the Afghan National Anthem they declared that no one had ever heard of such a tune! Eventually the commander-in-chief was appealed to for instructions. "It does not matter two straws," Kitchener replied, "the Ameer does not know a note of music. Play two or three bars of something heavy, pompous and slow, that's sure to please him!" A march from one of the older German operas, very little known by the general public was chosen and played with such success that the newspapers of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and other cities visited by the Ameer printed columns about the "weirdly beautiful Oriental strains of the Afghan national anthem." The tune in question is still, I believe, played at all royal functions at Cabul.

Though the papers devoted many columns to the Shah and his country, there was not the same glamour attached to his visit as there had been in 1872. One reason for this was that

his costume and that of his suite, was less resplendent than it had been seventeen years before. He had then appeared at a review at Aldershot, his coat glittering with gems, on a milk-white steed with a pink tail passed through a golden ring.

Nasr-ed-Din was growing an old man and found it more comfortable to abandon a good deal of the gorgeous clothing—coats stiff with gold lace, pearls and diamonds—which had been the traditional garb of Persian kings. The diamond *jika*, or plume emblematic of sovereignty which is worn in the *kola*, or lamb-skin cap, however, still remained an essential part of his state costume but on this, his second trip to Europe, he often appeared without it.

When he drove through the streets I observed that the reception of the King of Kings and his suite was somewhat cool—some of the Persians, indeed, expressed surprise at the coldness of their welcome by the crowd.

"Well," said I, "if your Shah were to put on the splendid uniforms he wore during his first visit to Europe, you would find the crowd more enthusiastic; they come out expecting to see him one blaze of diamonds, and only catch sight of an old gentleman in a black frock-coat and astrakan cap. Make him at least wear his *jika* and diamond belt with the great emerald clasp."

My remonstrances bore fruit, and though the Shah said the diamond-plumed cap made his head ache, he wore it several times during the rest of his trip; also he wore his famous diamond belt and other ornaments of dazzling appearance. The result was satisfactory, and I observed that the enthusiasm of the crowd was greater or less, according to the splendour of the royal visitor's costume and that of his suite.

Though no mention of it ever appeared in the press, the old Shah brought a lady with him to England. This was a Circassian girl, whom a Persian holding a high official position had presented to his sovereign in Constantinople, thinking to keep him in a good temper. The old Shah accepted the gift much as he would have accepted a rare kind of animal on which he would bestow a glance and, after having given orders that it should be well fed and looked after, never think of again.

As far as I know he never paid any attention at all to the young lady while he and she were in England. I fancy, indeed, that he looked upon her merely as an embarrassing sort of gift which had to be carted about till he got back to Persia again, when she would be married off to some petty governor or chief who would have to make a suitable present of money in return.

For some reason or other the girl followed the Shah in his visits to provincial towns. Anyhow, she was at Liverpool, and with the two eunuchs who had been told off to look after her, stayed at the Adelphi Hotel. Here I went to see her several times. The hotel authorities, I fancy, did not know that they were harbouring what I suppose corresponded to the beautiful Circassian slave of the *Arabian Nights*, for she was dressed as a Persian boy and lived with minor members of the Shah's suite, who had been lodged there.

When I saw her she was in a room with the two eunuchs, all three being dressed alike in Persian coats of dark cloth, dark trousers and a *kola* or lambswool cap. She was not particularly good looking but had a pleasant smiling face. I suppose she had been bought or kidnapped in the Caucasus, but this had in no way affected her spirits, for she appeared to be quite happy and was treated with considerable respect by the eunuchs. I gathered, however, that she thought Liverpool a little dull. She was quite at her ease and was very pleased to see an English lady whom, on another occasion, I took to visit her.

Besides the Circassian who never appeared at any public function, the Shah had with him a most ugly and unattractive little boy, who was very much *en evidence* at all the dinners and fêtes given in honour of the King of Kings. The history of this child was peculiar and well illustrates the change of fortune which may occur to even the humblest individual in the East. While on a shooting expedition in the mountains near Tehran, Nasr-ed-Din had chanced to enter a cottage for shelter from a storm. He had only been there a few moments when his attention was attracted by the cries of a child outside. Just as the Shah had gone through the door to see what was the matter, the roof of the cottage, which, like most humble Persian abodes, was ruinous, fell in. A moment sooner and the throne of Persia would have been vacant.



The Shah appreciated this, and deeming that the child had saved his life, adopted him as a sort of mascot or talisman. The boy was made a full General, given a fine uniform and a miniature diamond-hilted sword. Besides this, a special suite of servants was appointed to look after him, while in order to develop his military capacities, a little regiment of boys of about the same age, was formed and placed under the lucky little beggar's orders.

When the Shah left for Europe, he was unwilling to leave his mascot behind, so the boy, attended by some of his retinue, came too, and proved a fine little nuisance everywhere he went. One of his unpleasant tricks was his unpunctuality, which like Orientals of high rank and would-be smart American women, he thought conferred a certain amount of importance.

Though always arrayed in a costly uniform, the little wretch was untidy and ill-kept. He suffered, indeed, from a mild form of ophthalmia, a relic probably of his village days. Dr. Critchett having at last been summoned to see what could be done, the boy kept him waiting for an hour and then said he would not see him at all.

At a luncheon at the Guildhall which he attended in a full Persian General's uniform, the ill-mannered little fellow several times tried to put his hand in his next door neighbour's plate, his gluttony being aroused by seeing some morsel more tempting than was on his own.

Though the Shah carted this imp about from capital to capital, I do not think he paid any particular attention to him. Any attempt, however, to contradict or irritate their charge would have led to serious consequences for the members of his suite. The midget fully appreciated this. Happily he was a dull, lethargic child and, as long as he had plenty of food and sleep, fairly quiet.

The Shah, being rather a sufferer from sleeplessness, was at night always massaged by a member of his suite, who, by these means, plunged the monarch into a sound slumber.

According to a story which I only heard after Nasr-ed-Din had gone home, one of the Persians selected for this task so

infuriated his master by rudeness or incompetence that the Shah ordered him to be bowstrung then and there, in Buckingham Palace.

The man was executed on the spot, his body being taken out that night and buried in the palace gardens where, in some unknown spot, it still lies to-day. Whether the story is true or not I cannot say, but from what I know of the Persians of that day, the incident is not improbable. It should, however, be added that Nasr-ed-Din, according to his lights, was a humane man and one who would not have ordered an execution of this sort without a pretty good reason.

All sorts of queer stories are circulated concerning Oriental Potentates visiting London. One still remembers the extraordinary rumours which were current during the visit of the heir to the throne of Afghanistan, in 1895. According to one report, the Shahzada, much perturbed by the downfall of the Government, had, with true Eastern gallantry, at once offered the use of his Afghan escort to protect the royal family. He was also supposed to have expressed a wish to intercede for Lord Kimberley in consequence of the kind reception which the Secretary of India had given him. The august visitor indeed, was said to have petitioned that Lord Kimberley might be despatched at once, without having to submit to any elaborate or lingering death, and also to have signified his intention of being present at the execution of Lord Rosebery, in order to testify publicly his support of the reigning house. There was, however, I believe, some truth in the report that he had sent to a Bond Street gun-maker for a large quantity of ammunition, whilst setting his suite to work at the task of placing Dorchester House in a state of efficient defence, experiences in his own country having taught him that when a Government falls it is wise to be prepared for all eventualities.

After having attended a large number of functions in London, the Shah proceeded to carry out a programme which included visits to certain great provincial towns. When they had been with their Royal Master to Liverpool, Sheffield, and one or two more great commercial centres, certain older members of his suite who pleaded fatigue, were sent down to have a rest at Brighton, which they had already visited in company with the

Shah. Rooms were taken for them in a hotel facing the front.

Having had quite enough of provincial touring, I was glad to go too. The Persians were obviously delighted to have a respite from official dinners, sight-seeing, factory inspecting, and the like. The attempts to interest them in the commercial developments of a restless civilization had entirely failed.

Though dowered with an alert and clever mentality the Persian of the old school rarely manifested any admiration for what the Western world deems to be progress. A peaceful existence passed sitting smoking a water pipe by the side of running water in pleasant gardens seemed to such luxurious sages all that humanity could desire. The tedious complications of the modern world, like the unexplored wastes of their own *Kevir*, only serving as a perpetual reminder of the ultimate futility of all human effort.

Born in the twilight of a vanishing civilization, they did not scruple to hint that few things were worth a wise man's haste. They resented the tyranny of the time machine. "What good does it do me to travel in a railway train at fifty miles an hour?" enquired one patriarch. "A leisurely journey, during which I can stop as I please, is far more to my taste. As for time being money, that is only because a number of foolish men choose to make it so! Life is short enough, as Allah knows! Surely that is the very reason that we should not make it uncomfortable."

The great factories of the Midlands, with their huge output of manufactured goods had not impressed them at all.

"At Sheffield," said one of the visitors from Shiraz, "I was shown a sort of Hell where the machinery was so wonderful that it could turn out a million penknives a day! What does that matter to me? I do not want a million penknives, and if I did, I do not know how they could be carried away. Besides, such things as that, marvellous as they may seem to the foolish and ignorant, are nothing but inventions of *Sheitan*—the Devil."

The few days of peaceful repose at Brighton were much appreciated by these old Persians. They went out very little, spending most of the day smoking and looking through their windows which faced the front. The only thing which really amused them was an itinerant troupe of nigger minstrels, whose

quaint antics were generously rewarded whenever they went through their entertainment in front of the hotel. Nigger minstrelsy, indeed, seemed to tickle the Persian taste. When some time before the Shah had paid a visit to Brighton, a troupe he had seen in the Aquarium had pleased him almost as much as the aerial flights and feats of the beautiful Geraldine, a clever female athlete, whom the King of Kings would have liked to have taken back to Persia.

So great was the admiration of the old monarch for this lady that he had, there and then, enquired how many *tomauns* would be required in order to get her over to his capital. To his surprise and disappointment he was tactfully informed that such a thing was totally impossible.

His provincial tour having come to an end, it was decided that it would be well to enlighten the Persian ruler as to the pleasant character of English country-house life. Accordingly he was taken to make short stays at several lordly mansions, the owners of which had signified their willingness to receive him.

In due course I accompanied Nasr-ed-Din and his suite to Ashridge, Hewell, Waddesdon, Halton and some other houses. The Shah also went to Hatfield, where a great garden party was given in his honour. For the most part, however, the King of Kings and his Persians were not much impressed with English country life. The main thing which interested the higher officials was exactly what place they were to occupy at dinner. During one visit, indeed, the *Ameen es Sultan*, or Prime Minister, was so dissatisfied at not being accorded what he considered his proper precedence that he declared he would remain in his room without touching food till his return to town the next morning. Only with the greatest difficulty was he persuaded to abandon this resolve, and though he eventually consented to come down, he was very sulky throughout the evening.

As for the Shah, he rarely appeared, except at dinner. On one or two occasions when some unusually fat lady was present (female obesity is, or was, esteemed a beauty in the East), he would take off his spectacles, wipe them and have a good look at her. After which he would address her through an interpreter and enquire :

“ How many children have you got ? ”

If she replied that she was not married, the Shah would say :

"Why not? A fine woman should have a husband. You had better get one as soon as you can."

Except for a few words to ladies or an enquiry as to his host's estates, he displayed little animation, probably wishing himself back in Tehran, comfortably dining on the floor in the old Persian fashion.

The last item in the programme devised to interest and impress the Shah was a great naval review at Spithead. Crews cheered and cannon thundered—it was a magnificent sight. Finally came the leave taking of the Queen a function which certainly made a great impression on the Persian monarch.

In company with others who had been attached to the latter's suite, I found myself on the royal yacht, speeding towards Osborne. In due course, Nasr-ed-Din was ushered into the presence of the Empress of India, to whom he was presented by Sir Henry, while a number of us, including two or three Persians, stood a little distance away.

Queen Victoria, in attendance upon whom were two Indian servants in gorgeous native garb, was, according to her wont, dressed in a most simple manner. Though cordial, she showed immense dignity while welcoming her royal visitor, so much so was this the case that the latter, as was his habit when agitated, took off his spectacles, wiped them, and put them on again several times.

Stepping up to the Shah, the Queen presented him with her portrait set in diamonds, after which, mutual compliments and good wishes having been exchanged, the audience came to an end. Before returning to Portsmouth, we were given an excellent lunch. We then took leave of the Shah, and set out on our return journey to London.

As our vessel steamed away, we caught a last glimpse of old Nasr-ed-Din gravely nodding farewell from the deck of the ship, which was to carry him to France—and to a tragic death as well had he only known it!

On May 1, 1896, the Shah, who was by no means punctilious about religious observances, for once took it into his head to go to the Mosque at Shah Abdul Azim. He

never returned alive, being there assassinated by a Persian anarchist, "Mirza Reza," who was subsequently hanged.

In spite of the severe criticisms which from time to time were launched against Nasr-ed-Din on account of his reactionary tendencies, the wisdom with which this "last of the real Shahs" had ruled Persia, was shown by the fact that once he was dead internal troubles began to arise.

In his day no one would have dared to talk of representative assemblies or other democratic nostrums utterly unsuited to Eastern ways. Nasr-ed-Din, it is certain, would under no circumstances have assented to anything like the constitution of 1906, well described as "a paste and scissors compilation," mainly derived from French and Belgian sources and not fitted for the requirements of the people.

Whether Persia, which was once a great country could be rejuvenated by any possible means, it is difficult to say, the old Shah probably knew all there was to be known about the possibilities of his people and was content merely to keep things from getting worse. At the same time it must be admitted that he himself probably cared little about what Europeans call "Progress."

His main solicitude, indeed, was to be allowed to reign in peace, and not lay himself open to accusations of handing Persia over to European control. Nevertheless, he occasionally had to grant concessions, though he always did so in hopes of being eventually able to cancel them. If England obtained some commercial advantage, Russia would at once object, and as the old Shah had a wholesome dread of Russian military power, the advantage in question was apt eventually to be whittled away to nothing at all.

Lord Salisbury was quite ready to send the Shah warm messages of sympathy, full of assurances of moral support, but there was never any mention of more tangible assistance. Nevertheless, the old monarch must have had some sort of real regard for England. Considering the long line of the Perso-Russian frontier over which the well armed forces of the Czar could then have swarmed with ease and the frequent remonstrances (which were really threats) of the latter's Minister in Tehran, Nasr-ed-Din held the balance between the two great powers very fairly.

Indeed, he died having more or less succeeded in his main aim and desire which was to keep his dominions intact and not allow them to be dominated by either Russians or English.

Despite the jealousy of Russia, Sir Henry was not entirely unsuccessful in getting what he wanted out of the Shah. Witness the very valuable concession secured after a long series of negotiations by Baron de Reuter.

The concession in question, as was pointed out at the time, might have been said to have handed over Persia to the English, for it included mines, forests and practically everything of commercial importance. The value of this concession, however, was completely nullified by the opposition of Russia, which could not allow a country she had always had her eye upon to be run by her only serious rival.

The two important things which Sir Henry actually carried through, were the founding of the still flourishing Imperial Bank of Persia, under British auspices, and the opening of the Karun river to the trade of all nations in 1889.

The latter, in particular, was a real triumph for the British Minister. Immediately after his arrival in Persia he had begun working for it, and only with considerable difficulties did he succeed in getting his way.

With the assassination of the Shah some thought that Persia might enter upon a new era, but hitherto that country does not seem to have made any great strides upon the path of real progress.

The death of the monarch who had ruled so many years created a great sensation among his people, for five days later Nasr-ed-Din was to have celebrated his jubilee during which he was to have been the central figure at various magnificent functions.

All the elaborate arrangements for the celebration were immediately abandoned, while the old King of Kings was laid beneath the golden dome at Kum—the city which, as a royal burial place is rarely visited by living Persian rulers unwilling to be reminded of the inevitable end to which Shahs, like ordinary mortals, must come at last.

## CHAPTER IX





## CHAPTER IX

The West End during the late Victorian era.—The Bristol.—Globe.—Continental.—“Jimmie’s.”—Long’s Hotel.—The original Romano’s.—Mr. Corlett and *The Sporting Times*.—Its sale to Mr. de Wend Fenton.—Opening of the Savoy.—Restaurant clubs.—The Amphitryon and its *maitre d’hôtel*.—The Pelican and Barn clubs.—Fatty Coleman.—The Corinthian and Gardinia.—Night clubs then and now.—Verlaine and London.—Spendthrifts and their ways.—Music halls.—The *Lion Comique*.—Bessie Bellwood.—Bygone stars.—The London stage.—The German.—Reeds.—Corney Grain.—Sir Henry Irving.—Gaiety burlesques.—Musical comedy.—The Grove of the Evangelists.—Bohemianism at home and abroad.—I sail for Japan.

ONCE the old Shah and his suite had departed, I was free to throw myself into all the gaieties of a London which, though less luxurious was also less puritanical and more amusing than it has since become.

For the time being I had had enough of formal entertainments, and spent a good deal of time amusing myself in pleasant society. I usually dined at the Bristol in Cork Street, where a good dinner could be obtained for ten and sixpence, went on to a theatre or music hall, had supper at some restaurant, and finished up at the Gardinia or the Corinthian, two popular and Bohemian night clubs, which were filled to overflowing after midnight.

At the Bristol, ladies were sometimes taken to dine; the Café Royal, which was also popular, being frequented by more Bohemian society. Dining at the Bristol where, it must be added, the food was good, was a quiet enough affair. There was no band and the room was somewhat gloomy; a set dinner at a fixed price was served, the table decorations being unpretentious and the accessories far from elaborate.

Notwithstanding this, the place was always full of men-about-town, and certain well-known figures in the world of sport were constant frequenters. Sam Lewis, whose bow window overlooked the place, was constantly to be seen at lunch; whilst the Jubilee Juggins was a frequent visitor. Quite a number of *habitués* who came there every night had tables reserved for them.

No suppers were served; those who indulged in such a meal generally frequented the Globe, Rule's, or the Continental where a *table d'hôte* dinner was also served. A crowd of young men and more or less fair ladies thronged this place at supper time, and scenes occasionally occurred. On the whole, as a rule, however, these were the result of youthful exuberance and though—to the delight of the Puritans—the place was eventually closed, its disappearance merely drove the people who frequented it into more undesirable resorts.

The Globe, like a number of restaurants which included the original Scott's in the "eighties" still had rooms fitted up with boxes in which parties could dine in a privacy which was fairly complete. At one time literary Bohemians, including Swinburne, used to dine at this restaurant, but for years before it closed its speciality was supper, during which a great quantity of champagne was often drunk.

At Verrey's, then managed by the brothers Krehl, noted for their fine dogs, a very good dinner could be procured together with excellent wine. This restaurant still exists; its old-fashioned Victorian aspect, however, has long been changed by the place having been redecorated in a so-called Persian style.

Close by, under the same management, the Solferino was at one time very popular with men about town. There were of course, other supper resorts of a slightly less fashionable character—notably "Jimmie's."

It is now a good many years since the St. James's Restaurant, familiarly known by that name to several generations of pleasure

seekers was obliterated by the erection of the palatial Piccadilly Hotel. It is curious to remember that the St. James's Hall and restaurant were in mid-Victorian days considered no mean architectural achievement! The vast building which took its place is, of course, a much grander affair, though whether the very ornate style of its design is suitable to London, is another question. In any case, after various vicissitudes, this luxurious resort seems to have entered upon a career of prosperity far greater than was ever the lot of the more modest but more easy going "Jimmie's."

At the Blue Posts' in Cork Street, and at Long's (the latter a favourite resort of sporting men), a good English dinner could be obtained. There were one or two dishes, indeed, such as devilled soles, which were nowhere else to be equalled. Another feature was the peculiar blend of whisky and soda concocted by William—about the last of the old school of first class English waiters. He had a way of mixing this drink which old frequenters will still remember. Only in its last days were ladies admitted to dinner at Long's, which gradually lost its old character, and eventually became a family hotel.

Another restaurant with a clientele of its own was Romano's which, in the early "seventies," had first opened its doors as a small bar in the Strand, with a few tables like a foreign café. Its origin as a restaurant was really due to Mr. John Corlett who was a great frequenter of Simpson's and The Cheshire Cheese, at the former of which he used to give dinners to the staff of his paper, *The Sporting Times*.

During their peregrinations between these two hostelries in the Strand, Mr. Corlett and his friends came across Romano's and it became their practice to look in for "another nail in the coffin," as they playfully called an after-lunch drink. As time went on the little bar became one of their favourite haunts. The proprietor was civil and amusing and had the good sense to invest his profits in a cellar of first-rate wine.

Eventually it was suggested to him that he should turn his establishment into a restaurant, where food could be procured, and before very long, the cooking being good, Romano's, with its red velvet cushions, became a great success, the large table on the left of the entrance being every Friday, at lunch, reserved for Mr. Corlett and his staff, who had really made the prosperity of the place.

Though the views of most of the frequenters of Romano's were broad, the original restaurant was very narrow. As a matter of fact it fully justified its nickname, "The Rifle Gallery." The proprietor, christened "The Roman" by the staff of *The Sporting Times*, was a highly popular figure, and his death was much regretted by men-about-town.

"Ah," said one of these, sadly, as he caught sight of the title of a book, "The History of the Romanoffs," which a friend was reading, "they tell me the place has changed a good deal since the old man died." He thought it was the history of Romano's.

After the premises had been enlarged and rebuilt, Romano's became an ordinary first class restaurant, its close connection with the "*Pink 'Un*" gradually passing away as one after the other the staff of that vivacious paper joined the great majority. Some, however, were still alive when the paper was sold—an event which was not at all to their taste.

Mr. Corlett having, about 1908, had, what he considered a good offer from Mr. de Wend Fenton for *The Sporting Times*, out of which, in its hey-day, he had made as much as seven thousand pounds a year, accepted it. When he broke the news to the staff they were indignant and said they would not stick to the paper.

"But I sold it as a going concern," said Corlett.

"Well, we're going too," was the reply, and they all walked out of the office.

The opening of the Savoy in the late "eighties," inaugurating as it did an era of palatial caravanserais created a considerable sensation. I well remember how amusing it was to dine in the restaurant in those days—the rather cramped entrance passage which has now long been disused and the frame which hung there containing the first sovereign taken at the Savoy.

The restaurant was then panelled with mahogany, inlaid with coloured woods, the decorations having been designed by Whistler. The Savoy Company, I believe, still possess the panelling in question and it is to be hoped that it may some day once more adorn the walls for which it was designed.

Mr. Ritz, after having for some years been the ruling spirit of the Savoy, eventually migrated to the Carlton where he further increased his well-deserved reputation as a Napoleonic hotelkeeper.

The Ritz Hotel was founded in 1905 under the able management of Mr. Ellés, who had been one of the lieutenants of Mr. Ritz during the days of his first triumphs at the Savoy.

For a time there was a mania for restaurant clubs in the West End, but none of them lasted any considerable period. Willis's rooms in King Street St. James's, founded by the late Mr. Algernon Bourke, owing to the excellent cuisine enjoyed considerable popularity for some years, but it came to an end shortly after the management had started an exclusive supper club where ladies could go after the theatre—they soon got tired of seeing only one another.

The Maison Dorée Club in Dover Street, managed by young M. Verdier, had but a short existence—the only really successful restaurant club was the Amphitryon—quite without a rival. Its premises were at 41, Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, and the presiding *maitre d'hôtel* was M. Emile Aoust whom, I remembered at Bignon's in the *Avenue de l'Opéra*, in Paris. Aoust took a great interest in the French turf and was very prodigal of racing

tips which I suppose he backed himself, for unlike other *mattres d'hôtel* he never seemed to achieve permanent prosperity. Anyhow he certainly ran the *Amphitryon* in a very luxurious fashion, both the cooking and the prices being on a very high level.

An inaugural dinner was given to the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) who, together with the Duke of Connaught, had joined the club. The party on this occasion, numbering fourteen in all, included, amongst others, the Austrian Ambassador, Lord Dudley, Lord Chesterfield, Sir Frederick Johnstone, and M. de Soveral, already known as the witty and popular First Secretary of the Portuguese Legation in London, the whole thing cost about one hundred and twenty pounds, averaging something over eight pounds a head.

To find anything comparable to this, one has to go back a great number of years to a famous dinner given at the *Rocher du Cancale* in Paris, after the capture of Antwerp. On that occasion sixty-two officers were entertained at a cost of eighty francs a head, a price then considered fabulous.

The two faults of the *Amphitryon* were its expense and the limited accommodation. A first-class dinner, also, was very expensive, costing close upon ten pounds a head—an absurd figure. In addition to this the little tables were, on account of the smallness of the premises, so closely packed that confidential conversation was next to impossible. Upstairs, however, were comfortable private rooms in great request.

Those were the days of the Pelican and the Barn Club, to both of which I belonged. At the former, closely identified with Mr. Abington Baird, the main attraction lay in glove fights, and naturally it contained a good many members who were handy with their fists.

A question having arisen as to the expulsion of one of this class, notorious for his powers as a bruiser and liability to take

offence, the Committee were rather doubtful as to who should make themselves responsible for the action taken.

"If," said one, "the resolution for his expulsion is sent to him as having been passed by us, we shall all be assaulted, and as for the secretary who sends it he will be killed."

"Under those circumstances," suggested a committee man, "why not notify him by an anonymous letter?"

The Barn Club was merely a Bohemian resort where men could sit late into the night. There was a piano on which Edward Solomon, the clever composer of Billee Taylor and others occasionally delighted an appreciative audience.

This club was the constant resort of "Fatty Coleman," a man of immense girth who, in consequence of his great size had a special chair made for him in which he sat with great dignity.

According to a legend, which I believe was based on no foundation, Fatty Coleman in his youthful days had been an officer in the Life Guards. Possibly he had served in the army; in any case he impressed many a youngster fresh to Bohemian life with tales of the days "when I was in my old regiment."

Always trying to alleviate a chronic state of impecuniosity he at one time started a new brand of champagne, and by way of launching it on the town gave a dinner at one of the old-fashioned Jermyn Street hotels. Hughie Drummond was one of the guests, and after the wine had gone round created a sensation by rushing about the room sprinkling drops of it from his glass in all the corners, behind the curtains and on any cracks in the wainscoting.

"What are you doing, Hughie?" enquired his host.

"Only killing rats," was the reply. "I never came across better stuff for that sort of job in my life."

Fatty Coleman also founded the Sporting and Dramatic Club at St. Anne's, Barnes, a property of one hundred acres of land facing the river, then belonging to Lord Lonsdale. In the hall



of the house was a replica of the famous statue of Pauline Borghese, by Canova. This Fatty Coleman admired immensely. In an impressive manner he would point out its beauties to new members and proudly say :

“ This is Gladys Countess of Lonsdale, by Casanova.”

Here Fatty Coleman once had a fight with an individual even fatter than himself. The immense size of the combatants is said to have prevented either of the two getting at the other, both merely flapping their arms about like a couple of seals. Owing to only about thirty-six out of four hundred members having paid their subscription the Sporting and Dramatic Club came to a premature end.

Bohemian clubs of this kind during their brief existence did little harm, but a number of gaming houses masquerading as clubs did a great deal. For the most part such places were full of sharks—some of whom had been in the army while others, though they posed as Captains or Majors, had not.

Among the witnesses called in a celebrated turf libel suit was one of these captains. It was a question of a jockey's character, and counsel for the plaintiff said :

“ You have known John Jinks for many years ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ What is your opinion of him as a jockey ? ”

“ I have always considered him highly straightforward and honourable, and believe him to be quite incapable of not doing his best to win.”

“ In your opinion the idea of his pulling a horse is absurd ? ”

“ Quite.”

“ I think I am right in saying you held a commission in the army for some years.”

“ Yes, I was a captain in Her Majesty's 115th Regiment of Foot.”

Sir Charles Russell, for the defence, happening to know that the witness was at that time making a book, limited his cross-examination, when it came, to saying in a scathing tone :

" Captain Montgomery Jones, late of Her Majesty's 115th Regiment of Foot, now roaring the odds in the ring." And then sat down.

The jockey lost his case.

Cunning and plausible sharpers regularly lay in wait for wealthy noodles, many of whom were unmercifully fleeced.

In the late "eighties" the Lotus, which had achieved some popularity as a Bohemian night resort, had ceased to exist. The Corinthian, however, which was somewhat in the same line, was nightly thronged. Minor actresses were occasionally to be seen there, and for a night club of those days it was a comparatively quiet place. The same could not, with truth, have been said of the Gardinia in Leicester Square, a social club, as it called itself, to which election was more than easy. Five shillings to the porter and any name you fancied scribbled in a book made you free of the place, as long as you did not throw glasses about, knock people down or quarrel with lady members.

At the Gardinia everyone, women as well as men, were free and easy in their ways ; indeed this resort, as far as I remember, was the only place, outside Paris, in which I ever saw English people let themselves go.

And how amusing they can be, "our austere islanders," when once they have been able to cast off that aura of self-consciousness and prudery which hangs about them like a chill miasma or mist ! There was a lively little band, a very indifferent supper, and a pretty free consumption of drinks.

The great tunes of that day were, "You should see me dance the Polka" and the "*Pas de Quatre*" from "Faust up-to-date," the musical play by the late George R. Sims, in which poor little Teddy Payne made his first London success.

*Pas seuls* were not infrequent and those who danced them were always greeted with roars of applause. Serious disorder was sternly repressed, anyone indulging in it being unceremoniously thrown into the street. As a rule, however, general good humour prevailed.

The Gardinia, it must be remembered, was a unique and peculiar Bohemian institution which made no pretence of catering for those fond of prudery or reserve. Though at the night clubs of those days the company was apt to be mixed the fair sex—at least, during the earlier portion of the evening—rather affected the pose of behaving as if they were at a Society dance. Later on, however, they were apt to relax.

One charming damsel, having hitherto maintained a very correct and even severe attitude, electrified a supper-party which she had joined by suddenly kicking over the table, remarking, "I'm tired of being a lady."

Night clubs then were often ultra Bohemian places, where pleasant female acquaintances were easily to be made. They were, indeed, relics of the jolly old unreformed England, and not frequented by "young ladies" as are the night clubs of to-day.

It is, indeed, a far cry from the Gardinia and Corinthian to the Embassy and Ciro's. Dancing in old days was nothing like so general as at present, and a great proportion of young men about town never took the floor at all or only after a more than usually convivial supper.

The present night club, a development of a more primitive and less orderly institution, is certainly more civilized and luxurious, whether it is more amusing is another question. The old night club, of course, was merely another form of the night house of the "fifties" and "sixties," and not infrequently a very rough sort of meeting-place for nocturnal votaries of Bacchus and Venus.

Sitting at the luxurious and admirably conducted Embassy a short while ago, the writer could not help musing on the queer whirligig of time, in the course of which the rowdy resorts of the Haymarket and Panton Street had become by gradual stages changed into a fashionable social institution. On one side of the room sat the two daughters of the then Prime Minister, on the other his predecessor's wife—at intervals all three ladies danced with great vigour.

Though there was a good deal of social freedom in the London of the "eighties" and "nineties" it had already become a much more orderly city than when Pierce Egan's heroes, Corinthian Tom and Jerry Hawthorn, were witnessing the day and night scenes which Cruikshank pictured with such inimitable skill. Kate Hamilton's, Coney's and other nocturnal resorts, where men-about-town had revelled in the "sixties," were gone as well as the various casinos and dancing halls which the puritans had succeeded in getting suppressed.

A natural tendency seems to make older men exaggerate the joys of a vanished day. Generation after generation of Londoners continues to tell stories of a more amusing London which, nine times out of ten, they have never known. As a matter of fact London, since the closing of the Argyll Rooms and Cremorne, had ceased to be very gay at night.

Over forty years ago men-about-town deplored the lost gaiety of the West End. Writing in 1904, the late Sir Frank Burnand, speaking of the change in London amusements which had taken place in his time, quoted some lines from *The Colonel*, a highly successful piece produced at the Prince of Wales's theatre in 1881.

"The Colonel," played by Mr. Charles Coghlan, having returned from India, proposes making a night of it and says to Forrester, his friend:

"We'll begin at Evans's."

"It's closed."

" Surrey Gardens."

" Closed."

" Highbury Barn—Coal Hole—Cider Cellars."

" Closed—closed—closed."

" Well, then, we'll just look in at the Argyll."

" The Argyll rooms?—The 'Gyll's closed. No 'Gyll. Everything's closed."

" What a place!" exclaims the Colonel, " give me life in Paris."

A dialogue of a very similar kind might take place at the present day with a Londoner who has not been in town since July, 1914.

The description of the Metropolis given by Verlaine, who took considerable interest in the great city, and knew it in the "seventies" to some extent holds good to-day.

" London," wrote he, " is less sad than its reputation: true that to find any distractions in it one must be like myself at heart, a searcher; I find many. As for agreeable cafés nothing, nothing. One must resign oneself to horrible places called French coffee houses or holes frequented by commercial travellers in Leicester Square. What does that matter! This marvellous town is unbelievably black as a raven and noisy as a duck, prudish and perpetually drunken in spite of ridiculous laws about drunkenness, immense although in reality but a collection of little towns."

Since those days certain districts of London have completely changed their character. The aspect of Piccadilly, for instance, is entirely different now from what it was in the "eighties" when most of the frequenters were men-about-town and people who lived in Mayfair. It was then still something of a lounge, whereas now it has become merely a thoroughfare.

Up to the time of the Great Exhibition of 1851, Piccadilly was scarcely used at all except by those living in its immediate vicinity. The western suburbs were as yet more or less un-

developed, and the aristocracy almost alone frequented the Park. With the spread of London westwards all this has changed, and externally there is now not any very great difference between this quondam resort of dandies and the Mile End Road.

The pulling down and rebuilding of houses goes unnoticed all the time, nevertheless the appearance of whole streets has been entirely altered within living memory ; various features, formerly characteristic of the locality, being obliterated.

Who now remembers the boxes and trunks which used to be fixed on the facades of shops selling leather goods. Does anyone miss the huge gilded canisters and other quaint signs which used to distinguish grocers shops ? Even the chemists who once gloried in windows full of enormous painted glass jars and bottles are now content with a very modest display.

For the present, at least, the day of shop signs and other picturesque emblems has gone. The old-fashioned tradesmen seemed to be proud of what they had to sell, whereas the new ones would appear rather ashamed of it.

The West End tradesmen of past days though some made large fortunes often came nigh to ruin owing to the long credit which it was then their practice to give. The Bond Street jewellers in particular were owed thousands of pounds and often found great difficulty in getting paid.

Young spendthrifts, when time hung heavy on their hands, would lounge in and order a quantity of costly gewgaws without scarcely asking the price and without knowing very well what they were going to do with their purchases.

Except for the "Gaiety," music-halls rather than theatres were the favourite resorts of such young men, some of whom would have boxes at two or three different Halls of Harmony. Thus, if they felt bored at one they could go off to another.

It was the incursion of the feminine element which really destroyed the old-fashioned music-hall. Ladies went, at first,

attracted by the idea of having an unusual and Bohemian experience, but as their numbers increased the entertainment was modified and made more respectable.

Essentially a somewhat rough masculine institution, its peculiar atmosphere of unrestrained freedom vanished when the robust humour of the singers was toned down, in order not to shock a more sensitive and refined audience.

In place of Bacchanalian ditties, songs and jokes hinting at illicit love, "refinement," or what passes for refinement in suburban circles, banished the Old Lion Comiques, rendered the whole entertainment colourless if innocuous, and by so doing killed the music-hall, while substituting nothing worth retaining in its place. Coarse, rough and undesirable as it may have been, it was a true expression of a certain side of English life, and as such its loss is to be deplored.

My acquaintance with the old-fashioned music-hall began in the early eighties, when as an Eton boy I went to *matinées* at the Oxford. Here and elsewhere, I heard and saw Jennie Hill, Nelly Power, George Leybourne, the Great Vance, Arthur Roberts and the never-to-be-forgotten Bessie Bellwood.

On one occasion in 1882, I managed to get away to an evening performance at the Pavilion, where a chairman sat with his back to the stage, near the orchestra—a seat at his table being considered to be something of an honour. The most severe part of a chairman's duties must have been the consumption of drinks, which those enjoying it were always ready to stand him. Otherwise all he had to do was to announce what performer was going to appear next, as arranged with the management through a speaking tube.

In those days the floor of the Pavilion was filled with marble-topped tables at which the audience sat. This was a relic of the old supper days when people ate food while listening to songs. There were a number of ladies whose morals were not austere,

nevertheless, they were well behaved and gave not the slightest cause of complaint.

The female element was a feature of the old "Halls." At the old Pavilion, which only had boxes on one side of the house, every one of them usually contained a gorgeously attired lady or two, whose attendant swains—"mashers" they were then called—loll'd in the background in the languid manner distinguishing the Crutch and Toothpick Brigade, a confraternity whose principal place of worship was the sacred shrine of burlesque—the old Gaiety.

The old Pavilion was a very ramshackle affair which had been run up on the site of Dr. Kahn's anatomical museum, long denounced as a West End scandal. Here the "Great MacDermott" used to delight enthusiastic audiences with his very full-blooded ditties. No doubt they were generally inane and sometimes of an undesirable tendency, but, with all their shortcomings, there was considerable spirit and life in some of them. "Captain Criterion of London," it was said, so upset the rooks and hawks who frequented sporting bars in the West End that they made serious threats against the singer.

Owing to his famous song, "We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do," which originated the term "jingoism," still in use to-day, this lion-comique was for a brief period quite a political power, crowds flocking to the Pavilion to applaud him every night. Another song, "Charlie Dilke," dealing with the misfortunes of a late highly gifted politician in the Divorce Court, was also vastly popular. Though perhaps not in the best of taste, it was smartly written, and set to a capital tune.

MacDermott, in private life, was a most exemplary citizen, but on the stage he was essentially a rollicking singer. He voiced the attitude towards life which at that period was assumed by a number of young men. Their ideal would appear to have



consisted in being able to consume an unlimited amount of alcohol, smoke numberless cigars, and bask in the smiles of facile beauty. His voice was very loud, which made him audible to all the audience, and when with an opera-hat with coloured silk lining, and a coloured silk handkerchief in his shirt-front he came on the stage, the whole house seemed to be animated by a spirit of robust vitality and enjoyment unknown to the music-hall frequenters of the present day.

Another great favourite was the inimitable Bessie Bellwood, in her prime a fine handsome woman with a graceful sweep of her right arm as she came up to the footlights. Her "What cheer, Ria," "Its all right if you like the girl," "Aubrey Plantagenet," and other ditties never failed to bring down the house. Miss Bellwood possessed considerable powers of trenchant repartee, and was an expert at silencing any hostile or facetious interruptors.

Bessie Bellwood's real name was Elizabeth Ann Katherine Mahoney, and she was, I believe, the niece of John Mahoney, in his day a well-known black-and-white artist, who executed illustrations for "Oliver Twist" and "Our Mutual Friend" for the Household Edition of Charles Dickens. She died in 1896, at the very zenith of her popularity. Only thirty-six years old, she was followed to her grave by a large and sympathetic crowd.

As a recognized favourite she was succeeded by Marie Lloyd who achieved an even greater popularity.

George Leybourne, though owing to failing health not the man he had been in his "Champagne Charlie" days was, I remember, always given a good reception. His place as a representative of a fast young swell was taken by Charles Godfrey who made a hit with "The Masher King."

Arthur Lloyd for a time enjoyed great popularity, as did Jolly John Nash, a singer and cornet player, who, it was said, had once been a rich ironmaster.

There was a certain *naïveté* about certain turns in the old-fashioned music-hall programme. What would a present day audience think of a topical vocalist prepared to improvise verses suited to the days' events?

Such a one was Fred Albert, who rolled off patter with amazing celerity. I remember him singing a song dealing with celebrities, magic lantern portraits of which were flashed on a screen at the back of the Hall.

“And now there comes before our eyes  
A jockey true and good,  
Behold that prince of horsemen  
Our honest Charlie Wood.”

Up would go a picture of Wood in a racing jacket and cap, followed by applause and perhaps a few hisses from backers who had not been lucky over Charlie.

Albert Chevalier brought real artistic talent into the music-hall. About the same time Mr. Charles Coburn achieved a deserved success with “The man who broke the Bank at Monte Carlo”—one of the best songs I ever heard.

Gladstone and Beaconsfield were constantly alluded to on the music-hall stage, where comments on current politics were frequent.

For some reason or other, any reference of the sort is unpopular to-day, while if a public man is criticized even in a good-humoured way, critics are apt to speak of the reference as “regrettable.” Why regrettable? In Paris every revue teems with jokes about politicians, why should we not be allowed to have them here? One would think they were sacred figures like those ancient Eastern rulers, any reference to whom was deemed a sacrilege and punished as such!

The Lion Comique is no more. No longer do ladies clasping a Union Jack indulge in the chauvinism which in the past, brought tears into the eyes of half tipsy clerks. The old-fashioned music-

hall, indeed, scarcely exists. Though Collins's is said to have been the last of them, The Metropolitan, Edgware Road, which still flourishes, is about the same age.

The Bedford, at Camden Town, is also an old-time Hall, while the Holborn Empire, though of course a modern building, is merely a glorified successor of the old Royal, which in its turn succeeded Weston's, all three places of entertainment having occupied the same site.

The first theatrical performance I ever saw was that given by the German-Reeds, a clever couple who gave an entertainment then considered specially suitable for children and clergy, both of whom were not supposed to go to regular theatres.

As far as I recollect that admirable entertainer, the late Mr. Corney Grain furnished part of the programme giving imitations of various social types and singing ditties to his own accompaniment in a way which a host of people who have since tried to follow him have never succeeded in doing.

The first play I was taken to see was the "Corsican Brothers," with, I think, John Clayton in the leading part. Years later I saw Irving in the same piece much more elaborately staged.

A great success during my childish days was "The Voyage to the Moon" at the Alhambra, which was then a theatre. Though, I suppose, founded upon Jules Verne's famous book it was a musical extravaganza with a dashing principal boy impersonated by Miss Rose Bell.

I saw many of the original Gaiety Burlesques—"Little Doctor Faust," the "Forty Thieves," "Robin Hood," "Jack Sheppard," and other pieces. Nellie Farren was the quintessence of vivacity and Fred Leslie a comedian who has never been equalled since.

I also saw most of the early musical comedies which entirely eclipsed the light comic operas in which Florence St. John and Violet Cameron had deservedly achieved such success.

I remember the first performances of "Patience" and the prosperity which the works of Gilbert and Sullivan brought to the Savoy a theatre which together with the Lyceum became recognized as being a proper place for religious people and clergymen to go to.

Often did I go to see Sir Henry Irving—the latter was a friend of my mother's and was always charming to me whenever we met.

There was a wonderful cast in "Faust," one of the best-staged pieces I ever saw. George Alexander played the name part, Irving Mephistopheles, and Ellen Terry Marguerite, the minor rôles being also admirably rendered.

I liked Irving in "The Dead Heart" (one of several versions of "A Tale of Two Cities") in which Sir Squire Bancroft acted to perfection.

Toole, a most genial character off and on the stage, though enormously popular in mid-Victorian days would not, I fancy, be appreciated to-day.

The London stage has suffered severely by the death of a number of its favourites within recent years—the younger Irving, Sir George Alexander and Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree are difficult to replace. I saw the latter at the very commencement of his career in "Called Back" and often met him in private life—a witty and delightful talker whose loss cannot be sufficiently deplored.

On the whole I am inclined to believe that the English stage has rather deteriorated since the last century—not so much perhaps in the way of the serious drama as in lighter forms of theatrical entertainment, which too often have a tendency to become almost childish and inane.

In the "eighties" and "nineties" it was not an uncommon thing for a young man-about-town to have a box at two or three different music-halls or theatres the same night. Then

would come supper, often of a less decorous kind than the luxurious meal served in the palatial caravanserais of to-day. After that a number of roystering spirits, not inclined to go to bed, would sally out to try their luck at one of the illicit hells which opened their doors to the initiated in the West End.

Those were, indeed, dangerous days for rich young men, but I suppose though temptations are less openly displayed a wealthy noodle runs just as much risk of losing his money to-day.

One young friend of mine only just of age might have been said to keep a whole crowd of harpies in luxury not to say comfort. A gambling club was started solely for his benefit, and one day when he had been there to dress, all his jewellery was stolen. Setting aside this and what he lost at cards his membership proved very costly for, having in a moment of irritation accused someone of cheating, the man brought an action and recovered a very considerable sum in damages.

The pigeon in question was especially generous towards the fair sex. I can see him now entering a supper resort with a packet of jewellery which he proceeded to distribute to a number of ladies who made the place their headquarters.

Other young men of my acquaintance dabbled in theatrical management with disastrous result. One who had come into twenty thousand a year, though a play he had financed drew all London for many months, contrived to go bankrupt by the time he was thirty.

Up to the end of the last century something of the old Tom and Jerry tradition which included seeing life in rough places survived among the *jeunesse dorée*. Not a few of the haunts of pleasure were queer places, and if a young fellow got into them he knew what to expect. Many a one has had to fight his way out of an awkward corner, poker in hand.

Certain quarters of St. John's Wood, then ironically called "The Grove of the Evangelists" were supposed to be none too

safe, but I never heard of anyone coming to serious harm there though at that time a number of the odd-looking little houses were tenanted by Sirens of questionable fame. Strange things occasionally happened in this district which is now so staid and respectable, but the construction of the Great Central Railway, while sweeping away a number of villas, seemed completely to alter the character of that part of London.

As the French say, the English, though they like Bohemian life when they find it in another country, do all they can to drive it out of existence at home.

Be this as it may, I managed to extract a good deal of fun out of London, for as my friends gladly observed the somewhat austere existence I had been obliged to lead in Persia had not converted me into either a prude or a prig!

When I needed a change I paid visits to Paris and Monte Carlo where, at the end of 1889, I for once won a good stake and what was more to the purpose—kept it.

Enough, however, is as good as a feast, and my voyage to Persia having given me a taste for travel, in the spring of 1890, accompanied by a friend who had been at Cambridge with me, I stepped on board an outward bound P. and O. at Tilbury and started for far Cathay.

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## CHAPTER X





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Voyage to Japan.—Hong Kong.—Arrival at Yokohama.—Old and new Japan.—Deplorable mania of Japanese for copying Western ways and dress.—An ambitious poet.—Foreign critics and Japan.—Pierre Loti.—Lafcadio Hearn.—Uyeda, our *maître d'hôtel*.—Tokio.—The Yoshiwara.—Toio San and Kimi San.—By *Jinricksha* to Nikko.—Our house there.—Beauty of surroundings.—Some little *Geishas*.—The Samisen.—John Kino.—Visit High Priest.—Attend festival in honour of Shogun Ieyasu.—Toio San's religious ideas.—Shintoism.—Japanese gods.—A tale of old Japan.—Life at Kyoto.—A native menu.—A cheerful Japanese.—The Miakodori.—Nagoya.—Sayonara.—San Francisco.—Journey through America, Home

OF our journey to Japan, via Ceylon, Singapore, Hong Kong and other places, there is nothing interesting to tell that has not been said hundreds of times before. For a portion of the trip we travelled on the same boat as the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, both of whom made themselves very popular with the passengers to whom they were most affable. No one could have been nicer than the Duke, who, having made the voyage before, was full of interesting and accurate information, which he conveyed in the most agreeable manner possible.

Hong Kong I thought a charming place. There we discovered a new little hotel, high up on the Peak, which was kept by two black men, Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee we called them, as they were very much alike. The club was in every way excellent, altogether it seemed to me that one might have a better time at Hong Kong than in most of the other places we touched at.

From Hong Kong on to Japan. My first glimpse of Yokohama showed me that that country, pretty much as I had expected,

was more or less spoilt by its adoption of Western modes. The hideous fashion of men wearing horrible bowler hats, when dressed in kimonos, produced a ludicrous and lamentable effect. Why Count (afterwards Prince) Ito who was mainly responsible for the introduction of Western ways, should have deemed it necessary to make Japanese men wear hats, when for ages they had, to a great extent, done without them, is a thing very difficult to understand.

This maker of modern Japan, with his idea of Westernizing his country, deliberately set about destroying much which was artistic and beautiful. He it was, I believe, who first suggested the introduction of German Court etiquette in the place of the ancient ordinances which had prevailed from time immemorial. He it was, too, who persuaded the Empress to discard the beautiful costume of old Japan and assume a travesty of European Court dress concocted in Berlin !

After 1886, owing to the Western costumes of the court ladies, the Royal Garden Party, once a dream of artistic beauty, degenerated into something of a nightmare.

The Japanese are fond of boasting of their high civilization, but surely this was one of the most barbarous acts of vandalism ever committed ?

A great deal of praise has been lavished on Prince Ito and other makers of the new Japan, which in some ways was certainly deserved. Why, however, did they deliberately try and uglify their country by doing all they could to make the people despise modes and customs, some of which were far more civilized than anything of the sort in Europe.

The Japanese are a very clever and thoughtful people and it is curious that those who were responsible for the modernization of their country did not perceive the absurdity of discarding their own graceful official robes in favour of uniforms and cocked hats which were connected merely with the social history of Europe.

In Japan such a garb has no meaning at all. As for European court costume for Japanese ladies, considering the æsthetic beauty and hygienic value of their ancient costume, the change was a piece of wilful vandalism and folly which, from the point of view of true civilization it is impossible to defend.

It is to be hoped that before the lapse of many years those in authority will perceive this and once more revert to the beautiful and artistic robes which invested their charming wearers with a graceful dignity to which, tricked out in Western modes, they can never attain.

There is perhaps something to be said for a European working dress for men, but top hats and frock coats out of Europe are apt to produce anything but an impressive effect. The artistic atrocities mentioned above are only part of the price Japan has had to pay as a result of its attempt to copy Western ways, the populace at large having probably led a happier existence when the country was in its old isolated state.

On the other hand the nations which dragged Japan out of her seclusion on the usual lying pretext of civilization, etc., have little reason for self-congratulation. She is already something of a danger, while from the point of view of trade, she does her best to undersell everyone in all the markets she can reach.

Commercialism, indeed, has profoundly affected the nation while vulgarizing its outlook and destroying its taste.

The æsthetic perfection which was associated with the daily life of a Japanese noble before 1868 is declared by those who saw it to have been striking in the extreme, but directly the country was opened to Europeans, native art began to decay.

Someone has well said, "Old Japan was like an oyster—to open it was to spoil it."

Modern Japan, where industrialism has taken the place of chivalry, and where feudalism and isolation which produced a special class of art connoisseurs, are things of the past, now supplies

the huge and ignorant foreign public (which buys all sorts of rubbish) with goods exactly suited to its utter incapacity of understanding really beautiful things.

At the time of my visit a great mania prevailed for European ways. This had produced some amusing results as in the case of an English magazine started by Japanese students in Tokio, in 1886. At that time the English language (which, I believe, is especially difficult for Japanese to learn) had been but indifferently acquired by a gentleman who, in September of that year, contributed a poem in praise of woman.

### HER GLEE

The purest flame, the hottest heat  
Is Woman's Power over earth;  
Which mighty black and pale down beat,  
And made the Eden, place of birth.

Of what? Of what? Can thou tell me?  
A birth of Noble, High, value—  
The station He destined for thee  
Of Woman, Mother, Social Glue.

Let her be moved from earth to try  
What dark mist overwhelms human race?  
Let Lady claim with all the cry:  
"Can you still hand and hold your peace?"

How sweet, how mirthful, gay is Name!  
What boon, thing may exceed in kind?  
Would she be praised, entolled—not Shame:  
Tie Pale of Both, to bound to bind.

A large number of visitors to Japan have written books, even a very short acquaintance with the country having a tendency to make people rush into print. One young French Count, after a visit which had lasted only three months, summed up his acquired wisdom in a work which began "*Le Japonais n'est pas intelligent.*"

Another visitor declared that an eight weeks' residence was the exact time qualifying an intelligent man to publish his impressions. A shorter period, said he, tended towards superficiality—a longer induced a false mental focus.

The majority of books written by visitors to Japan contain a certain amount of gush. An amusing exception was "North Star and Southern Cross," written in the "eighties" by Miss Margaretta Weppner. Besides most unflattering allusions to the Japanese, whom she called disgusting creatures, this book was very severe on European residents. Speaking of Yokohama the authoress said :

"It will be well understood that the life of the European in Japan is, after all, a wretched one. The senses and the animal appetite are abundantly provided for ; but the mind, the heart and the soul are left totally destitute. There are clubs, it is true, but at the time of my stay in Yokohama, they were mere gastronomical resorts. The pure-minded men of the island live at home, where they can enjoy just as much comfort as in the clubs, and are rarely seen in them, except when dramatic companies, comedians, whistlers or such people visit this land. A few of the better Europeans visit the club to kill time.

"I had occasion to remark during my stay in Yokohama that the perennial monotony of the place and the sensual life led there have reduced many of them to a state bordering on imbecility. It was difficult to believe that the drivelling trash which they talked could have its origin in the head at all. The eyes of such men are dull and they have a kind of idiotic stare. They see and hear only what directly attracts the stomach and senses. It is useless moralizing further on this subject ; but I cannot refrain from adding that the impression produced upon a healthy mind by this portentous abasement is very disheartening."

"Madame Chrysanthème," though not a book for missionaries or Misses, gives a good idea of certain aspects of modern Japan,

but Pierre Loti, the author, possibly over-emphasises the smallness and comicality of the native life. The French, indeed, are apt to be severe on the Japanese mania for copying European ways.

*"Le Japon, voyez-vous,"* said one of their diplomats, *"c'est une traduction mal faite."*

Pierre Loti in spite of the defect touched on above, certainly acquired an intimate knowledge of Japanese ways, while Lafcadio Hearn seems to have in some degree understood the elusive native mentality. Both of these writers, however, lived among the people which the ordinary globe-trotter never does.

One thing is certain, spending one's whole time in hotels with Europeans is not calculated to teach people much about an Eastern country. My travelling companion, like myself, was quite of this opinion and so we determined to go to some pretty spot in the interior and take a little house. We eventually chose Nikko and having secured the services of a Japanese—"Uyeda" by name—who was to act as our factotum and *maitre d'hôtel*, we instructed him to make the necessary arrangements.

Meanwhile, having exhausted all there was to be seen in Yokohama we went a good deal to Tokio and admired its beautiful temples and parks. Many a visit did we pay to the great Buddha at Kamakura. We also saw as much as we could of the life of the inhabitants of the capital, the ancient charm of which, however, had already been somewhat impaired by buildings in the European style and other incongruous innovations. The moated castle where the Shoguns held their court before Yedo had become Tokio in 1868, still stood but now contained the palace of the Mikados who, after a seclusion of several centuries as spiritual Emperors at Kioto, had in the person of Mutsu-Hito, once more reassumed actual rule.

The buildings within the castle where the Shoguns formerly had their abode have been for the most part remodelled or rebuilt,

the palace of the Mikado, or Emperor as the Japanese prefer to call him, being partly in native and partly in foreign style. In the latter the *Corps Diplomatique* and distinguished guests are received, banquets being occasionally given at which everyone is served upon gold plate specially made in London.

The Mikado on public occasions wore European uniform, but in his own private apartments I fancy that he reverted to the more comfortable and artistic kimono. His ancient ceremonial costume, however, after the inauguration of *Meiji*—the new era of Westernization—was worn by him but three times a year when certain rites connected with the ruling family were punctiliously carried out.

Though the outer walls of the castle still retained much of their old picturesque aspect an incongruous note was struck by the Imperial carriages with coachmen and attendants in top hats and European liveries passing through ancient gateways which had seen generations of fierce-eyed *samurai* come and go.

Gone the picturesquely equipped two-sworded retainers who were wont to escort the feudal lords of a vanished era! Gone the mediæval pomp and state of the Shoguns before whom forgotten Daimios were wont to tremble! The last Shogun (who was alive during my visit to Japan) habitually went about in a cloth cap, Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers, and though he had had powers of life and death over all Japan was content to amuse himself with an occasional day's rabbit shooting!

Thus ended the rule of the Tokugawa dynasty which, as a centralized bureaucracy, had endured for several centuries. The family, however, still retains high rank among the Japanese nobility.

Not very long ago I sat next a grandson of the last Shogun at a luncheon party in London. A mild looking, courteous gentleman, in European dress and wearing spectacles, it was difficult to realize that under other circumstances he would



have passed his life amidst a crowd of armed retainers ready instantly to despatch anyone unlucky enough to have aroused their lord's displeasure.

In 1890, during my sojourn in Japan, was constituted the semi-advisory Parliament on the Bavarian model which, with its House of Peers seems to have given satisfaction. At present, however, there appears to be some idea of extending the franchise and strengthening its somewhat limited powers.

The real rulers of Japan, in spite of elaborate imitations of Western political methods, are it is said, still the two great clans of Satsuma and Choshiv who, in serious questions of internal and external policy have made their influence felt ever since the abolition of the Shogunate which had effectively curtailed their aspirations and importance.

The Daimios of Satsuma and Choshiv, it is true, with all the other Daimios, disappeared at the same time, nevertheless a large proportion of the leading statesmen and high officers of State seem to be drawn from one or other of these clans.

The lover of the picturesque cannot help regretting that the title "Daimio" with the artistic associations and surroundings which it evokes, has ceased to exist. The manner in which the great majority of these chiefs of clans, as they may be called, assented to their own abolition was a striking proof of the ardent patriotism and veneration for the Emperor which animated and still animates high and low—Prince and peasant—throughout Japan.

One of the national institutions which, at the time of my sojourn remained much as it had been in the days of the Shogun, was the "Yoshiwara," a quarter of Tokio entirely reserved for courtezans who at night time were to be seen sitting like wax-works behind open lattice-work screens facing brilliantly lit streets. The great majority, I observed, still retained the gorgeous robes and halo of long ornamental hair pins prescribed for ladies of their calling by immemorial tradition.



YOSHIWARA BEAUTIES  
(From a rare old print)



The inmates of a few houses, however, presented a grotesque and pitiful appearance tricked out in Western garb, while a further sign of the spread of civilization (?) was a number of photographs of favourite beauties whose favours were to be obtained inside.

In old Japan the "Joro," or fashionable courtesan, had quite a position of her own and on certain days, in resplendent raiment of traditional design, with a retinue of attendant girls was wont to take part in ceremonial processions of a more or less official character through the Yoshiwara.

At the time of my visit it was said to be somewhat dangerous for Europeans to enter the houses there, Japanese revellers being apt to resent the intrusion of visitors unlikely to approve of the existence of tolerated vice. Brilliantly lit by electricity and lined with cherry trees whose blossoms were one of the sights of Tokio at the proper season, the streets seemed safe enough, though some of the little soldiers one met had a truculent look.

Since those days various attempts have, I believe, been made to abolish the Yoshiwara as an undesirable institution. There is no doubt, however, that, on the whole, this system of relegating the "gallantry" of the capital to one special quarter is far more salutary than the method of diffusing it all over the place as is the favourite Anglo-Saxon plan. It is to be hoped that the Japanese will listen to the counsels of reason and refuse to be deluded by the puritan fanaticism which has in England and America produced so much misery and disease.

We went to other places besides Tokio and with various excursions amused ourselves fairly well till one day "Uyeda" appeared and told us that a house and servants having been secured we could start for Nikko whenever we pleased. I told him I should like to see something of the native part of Yokohama before leaving, so he took me to visit some of his relatives who lived there. One of them, an attractive little lady called

Toio San, having made rather a favourable impression, I suggested that she should give us the pleasure of her company on our tour. After some slight discussion, this, with the full consent of her family, she willingly consented to do.

It was agreed that another *mousmee*, Kimi San, should come as companion. The latter, an extremely pretty little thing, never ceased to smile, being rather a contrast to Toio who was of a more serious disposition. These two damsels remained with us, more or less, throughout our stay in Japan. They did not, however, often share our meals. We thought that they would be far more at ease enjoying their own kind of food with their relative, the *maitre d'hôtel*, through whom I had made their acquaintance.

In those days the railway to Nikko had not yet been completed, so we went there in *jinrickshas*, a not unpleasant means of progression, even for the somewhat considerable distance between that resort and Tokio, from which place our start was made.

*Jinriksha*, which is really *jinrikisha*, is said by the Japanese to have been a native invention, but foreign residents have attributed its origin to an American named Goble, who was in Japan about 1867. According to another story, the *jinriksha* was originally invented by an Englishman known as "public-spirited Smith," whose father-in-law was the proprietor and editor of one of the English newspapers at Yokohama.

The compound word *Jin-riki-sha*, according to an authority, Mr. Chamberlain means literally "man-power-vehicle," that is, a vehicle pulled by a man. Some have imagined *sha* to be a corruption of the English "car." This is quite erroneous. *Sha* is a good old Chinese word. The poor word *jinrikisha* itself suffers many things at the hands of Japanese and foreigners alike. The Japanese generally cut off its tail and call it *jinriki*, or else they translate the Chinese syllable *sha* into their own language and call it *kuruma*. The English cut off its head and

maltreat the vowels, pronouncing it rickshaw. Under various names this convenient little two-wheeled vehicle has spread all over the English and French colonies in the East to the Dutch Indies and to the Cape and Natal.

The approach to Nikko is through a beautiful avenue of fine Cryptomerias and we were delighted with the trees and verdure in which the place—the beauty spot of Japan—is embowered. What with our *maitre d'hôtel*, the two *mousmees*, and our own luggage, it was quite a procession which arrived at the house, the former had arranged for us to occupy.

With a stream running through the little garden in front, and a bath-house attached, our abode, with its spotless woodwork and mats, was both comfortable and attractive. We had no European beds, sleeping on the floor in the Japanese fashion. Indeed, the only Western furniture in the house were two or three wicker-work chairs which we managed to procure.

There was plenty of electric light even at that date (1890); nearly every little village in Japan being lit by that illuminant which as yet was not too general outside big towns in Europe, the water power often ready to hand of course facilitated its installation.

By way of decoration there were a few *kakemonos* and a curious old clock of brass which only indicated the hours.

We did not fare too well in the way of food; some tinned meats we had brought from Yokohama proving useful. The owner from whom the house had been leased, put in an occasional visit. I never understood where he or our *maitre d'hôtel* lived; however, they seemed always to be on the spot when they were wanted.

The day after we had installed ourselves, I found in our bath-house two little Japanese ladies, with elaborate coiffures, sitting in the huge wooden bath, heated from beneath, smiling above the water which reached up to their necks. They were not in the least disconcerted at my appearance, and after exchanging

greetings we became excellent friends. The *maitre d'hôtel*, who happened to appear upon the scene, after explaining that the pretty couple belonged to a troupe of local *geishas* (dancing and singing girls) was at first rather inclined to make excuses for their having presumed to make their ablutions in a building which we, no doubt, wished to reserve for ourselves. I told him, however, that I was only too pleased to see the little ladies, and hoped they would make themselves thoroughly at home, while the bath would be always at their disposal. As a matter of fact, both my friend and myself used portable indiarubber baths, which we had brought with us from England.

Before the coming of Europeans, nudity, it must be remembered, meant nothing to the Japanese who never dreamt of its being indecent. When, in early days, the English and Americans found men and women bathing naked in public bath houses, they professed themselves terribly shocked, whereupon, as a concession to Western ideas of decency, a string was stretched across certain public baths in Tokio, dividing the men from the women. Often in villages I have seen both sexes innocently bathing together in a state of nature, no thought of evil seemed to enter their heads.

In the towns, however, the Western prudery which itself is really an indecency, was beginning to permeate the well-to-do classes, some of whom were adopting the more sophisticated and more demoralizing standards of the West. But nothing of this sort had yet reached Nikko and our little *geishas* continued to bathe in public as generations of Japanese girls had done before them.

In their professional capacity they often came and gave performances in our house. They had not got the expensive and elaborate costumes of the Tokio *geishas*, but were dainty and attractive; in addition to which they went through the graceful posturing of various dances in no slovenly fashion.

The music was furnished by three or four of the troupe who played the usual Japanese instruments—lutes, flutes, drums and fiddles of various sorts, all of which it is said originally came over from China, like most other things good and bad, in the train of Buddhism. The *samisen*, a sort of banjo, would appear to have been introduced from Manila as recently as the year 1700.

The *samisen* scale, it may be added, like the scale of mediæval Europe, has for its chief peculiarity a semitone above the tonic. This is one among various reasons for believing that the *samisen*, together with its scale, found its way to Japan from the Spaniards at Manila and not from Loochoo, as a Japanese tradition avers.

As has before been said, our *geishas* not having been exposed to European influences were quite devoid of the sham prudery which sophisticated *geishas* assume to please English and Americans. For this reason they made not the slightest ado about dancing the John Kino, a dance which, as a concession to Western prudery, had been prohibited by the Japanese Government, at least so we were told.

The dance in question was, I believe, of European origin, having been more or less invented by the Dutch on the island of Deshimá in the days when the latter were the only foreigners allowed to trade in Japan.

A couple of girls in turn face one another and go through various movements. For instance, one expresses the flight of a bird, and another a sportsman shooting it; one makes signs symbolizing fire and another pretends to put it out. A girl who fails to make the movement appropriate to that of her companion pays forfeit by removing part of her attire, with the result that eventually there is not much clothing upon those who have taken part in the dance.

The whole thing is accompanied by hand clapping, while the girls who compose the orchestra play and sing a tune, the refrain of which is :



“ John Kino, John Kino,  
John, John, Kino, Kino,  
Yokohama, Hakodate, Nagasaki Hi !”

The song in question, if it can be called a song, with some additions, formed a very popular number in the *Geisha* which had such a well-deserved success in London some years ago.

The John Kino is merely one of a number of forfeit dances or games, of which the most popular is the *Kitsune-Ken*, or Fox Forfeit. In this, various positions of the fingers represent a fox, a man and a gun. The man can use the gun, the gun can kill the fox, the fox can deceive the man; but the man cannot kill the fox without the gun, nor the fox use the gun against the man. John Kino, it may be added, is probably derived from the Japanese *chon ki-na* or *choi ki-na*, “ just come here.”

Round about our house were charming paths beneath fine trees. My favourite morning stroll was along the river side called the walk of the “ hundred Buddhas,” on account of the images of that deity which lined one side. The whole place was a delight.

A rhyming Japanese proverb says, “ Do not use the word magnificent until you have seen Nikko.” One of the most beautiful spots in Japan, it can boast a double glory—that of nature and that of art. Sheltered by mountains and refreshed by streams and cascades, amid monumental forest trees, is the most perfect assemblage of shrines in all Japan.

Here are the mausoleums of the illustrious Shogun Ieyasu and of his scarcely less famous grandson, Iemitsu—the actual tombs of plain bronze—no gold, no ornament of any kind, a fitting contrast to the gorgeous, though not gaudy, decorations of shrines abounding in gay designs and bright colours.

As has been pointed out, “ There is no small amount of poetical feeling in this simple ending to so much magnificence; the sermon may have been preached by design, or it may have been

by accident, but the lesson is there." Would that Western architects, with their insensate craze for inappropriate ornamentation, might take this to heart.

A feature of the mortuary chapel of Ieyasu at Nikko is some carving by Hidari Jingoro—a Japanese Phidias of the sixteenth century. The two elephants and a sleeping cat are among the most celebrated productions of his chisel.

It is related that a horse which he had carved as an ex-voto used to leave its wooden tablet at night and go down to the meadow to graze. According to another legend, Jingoro, having become enamoured of a frail beauty he had seen in the street, set about carving her statue. Like Galatea, this eventually came to life, much to the joy of the sculptor.

Once a year, in honour of the great Shogun Ieyasu, a festival is held at Nikko, when are seen the dress, armour and trappings of the *Samurai* of old Japan, whose memory is kept green by a procession of warriors crossing the red lacquer bridge, never opened except on that occasion when the sacred piebald pony which has his comfortable stable in the Temple grounds, is also given an outing.

We happened to be there at the time, and shortly before the great day, went to interview one of the chief priests, with a view to being allotted good places. Taking our *maitre d'hôtel* with us as interpreter, we went to the ecclesiastic's house and were ushered into a small room furnished in European style, which was evidently kept for receiving visitors. The ugliness of the wallpaper, furniture and carpet, could scarcely have been surpassed. In Japanese copies of European rooms the effect is too often a reproduction of a third rate Margate boarding-house.

The priest, who to our relief, was dressed in his graceful native robes, was extremely polite, inviting us to take a couple of the hideous chairs, of which, no doubt, he was very proud. After

the interchange of compliments, we said we had ventured to call in the hope that we might be allotted seats to view the interesting ceremony which was about to take place. In as tactful manner as possible, we added that we hoped we might be allowed to offer a trifling present in aid of the Temple fund.

Everything turned out to our satisfaction, and we went away with a couple of richly illuminated cards which I fancy made us members of the Shinto religion. Anyhow, when the great day came, we had good places in a neat little pavilion, from which one got an excellent view.

Somewhat to our satisfaction, we were the only Europeans present, but a number of local notables proudly wore Western dress. Toio San and Kimi San, as neat as new pins, had seats elsewhere with our *maitre d'hôtel*. We caught sight of our nice little *geishas* in the crowd and they did not fail to salute us with graceful bows.

The procession went off very well, the fat little sacred pony being led across the bridge, with a somewhat bored look on its placid face. Priests, men at arms and retainers, all in ancient costume, escorted a man, dressed to represent the Shogun, who, surrounded by banners and emblems carried in ancient days, bore himself with becoming dignity. The actors in all this were not professionals, but priests and men drawn from Nikko and the surrounding district. Everyone entered into their part with fervour, the only drawback being that in many cases the armour and weapons were a good deal the worse for wear. Nevertheless, the whole effect was picturesque, and gave one a good idea of what old Japan was before it had been vulgarized by the attempt to copy Europe.

I often went with Toio San to the Temple, the beautiful fore-court of which was generally full of happy children and cheerful *mousmees*—she was fond of visiting a shrine to one of the gods, which occupied a prominent position.

Throwing a coin into a box, she would pull a rope which rang a gong, in order to attract the attention of the presiding deity, after which she would repeat a little prayer. This over, she generally burst into a fit of laughter.

"Why lady laugh?" I asked our *maitre d'hôtel* one day.

"Suppose she laugh because she think it all damned nonsense," was the reply—but my own idea is that she didn't.

The Japanese are very curious about their religious observances, and it is almost impossible for a foreigner to get at what their ideas on this subject really are. Though they will assume an attitude of indifference as to their shrines and gods, it is probable that the majority still venerate them.

In February, 1889, Viscount Mori, who had been Japanese Ambassador in England and America, lifted the curtain which conceals the chief shrine in the Temple at Ise, with his walking stick, with the result that he was shortly afterwards assassinated by a Shinto fanatic.

Shintoism which is really a sort of philosophy, was restored as the state religion when the Mikado once more became the real ruler of Japan. Buddhism, however, flourishes by its side; there seems to be no antagonism between the two creeds.

The exact nature of Shintoism seems to a European, rather obscure. Sir Ernest Satow, an authority, referring to it says:

"Shinto has scarcely any regular services in which the people take part, and its priests (Kannushi or Shin-shoku) are not distinguished by their appearance from ordinary laymen. Only when engaged in offering the morning and evening sacrifices do they wear a peculiar dress of their own. This consists of a long loose gown with wide sleeves, fastened at the waist with a girdle, and a black cap bound round the head with a broad white fillet. The Japanese name for the former, which is frequently of brocade is *hita-tare*, and of the latter, *eboshi*. The priests are not bound by any vows of celibacy, and are free to adopt another career whenever they may choose.

“ At some temples young girls fill the office of priestess, but their duties do not appear to extend beyond the performing of the pantomimic dances known as *Kagura*, and assisting in the presentation of the daily offerings. They likewise are under no vows, and marry as a matter of course when their time comes. The services consist in the presentation of offerings of rice, fish, fruits, vegetables, the flesh of game, animals and rice-beer, and in the recital of certain formal addresses partly laudatory and partly in the nature of petitions. The style of composition employed is that of a very remote period, and would not be comprehended by the common people, even if the latter were in the habit of taking any part in the ritual.”

The Japanese Government has since 1873, been very tolerant as regards the Christian religion, most forms of which seek to lure converts into their fold. There are now, I believe, about two hundred thousand native Christians ; between 1614 and 1638, there were over a million ! In 1636, however, owing to the political activities of Roman Catholic priests, Christianity was practically stamped out, the Japanese forbidden to go abroad and no foreigners except some Dutch traders on the island of Deshima, allowed. This isolation of Japan lasted till the middle of the nineteenth century towards the end of which, as has been said, Shintoism was officially declared the national religion.

There is something rather uncanny about Japanese temples and gods. While at Nikko, the friend who was in Japan with me managed to secure a number of elaborately ornamented brass wall plates which had once hung in a Shinto shrine. I told him I thought this was unlucky ; however, he had them sent home and hung in his country house in England. He was then a rich man, and as he never gambled, there was every reason to believe he would remain one.

Nevertheless, within less than two years, he was completely ruined. Owing to heavy losses in the City, his beautiful country

house and estate had to be sold, and eventually he found himself hard put to it to keep body and soul together.

Like most visitors to Japan, I made a number of purchases—among them a good many “Netsukes.” I was especially attracted by these quaint little images some of which represented the Seven Gods of Luck. These are “Fukurokuju,” distinguished by a preternaturally long head, and typifying longevity and wisdom; “Daikoku,” whose rice-bales show him to be the god of wealth; “Ebisu,” bearing a fish and serving as the patron of honest work; - “Hotei,” with an enormous naked abdomen, a bag on his back and a fan in his hand, and signifying contentment and good nature; “Bishamon,” the impersonation of war, clad in armour and bearing a spear and a toy pagoda; “Benten,” the goddess of love, distinguished by being the only female in the assemblage; and “Jurojin,” a sort of repetition of “Fukurokuju,” both being often accompanied by a stag and a crane.

Whatever luck they may have brought to the Japanese they brought no luck to me! Indeed, while they were in my possession everything went wrong and I was more or less out of sorts for a long time after my return to England.

They always appeared to look angry, even “Benten,” the merciful, seemed in anything but a gentle mood. Gradually I got rid of them all—a number I sold, the others I gave to friends who had taken a fancy to the little images.

At last, only one remained, “Dikoku,” the jolly little god, who, hammer in hand, sitting upon rice bags, is supposed to ensure prosperity. Having carefully packed the deity in a nice little box, I sent him to the Postmaster-General, at Tokio.

Things began to go better, but still all was not well. I had forgotten a little metal Buddha which had been given me as a sort of charm. Fortunately, a friend of mine, Mr. Yoshida, a popular and highly cultivated secretary of the Japanese Embassy

in London, consented to take the little figure out of my hands. He was not a bit surprised at my being anxious to get rid of it, telling me—and this is very curious—that he had known a number of cases in which English people in possession of Japanese gods had asked the Embassy to take them over, their impression being that such figures exerted an unlucky influence over their owners' health or fortunes.

All this may seem to be pure nonsense, and no doubt, ill-luck is in a great measure produced by the mere idea that something we have is unlucky. Nevertheless, as Montaigne, said, "*Que sais-je ?*"

During my residence at Nikko, I became entirely inured to draughts, our house, like all Japanese houses, freely admitting the air. The Japanese have no liking for stuffy rooms, of which owing to the way their homes are constructed, they have little experience. One elderly diplomatist staying in a Japanese hotel spent a great deal of time in the vain endeavour to keep doors shut and chinks closed up.

"*Oh, que les Japonais adorent les courants d'air,*" he would pathetically exclaim. It would have been more sensible, had he recognized that such a partiality produced better health than closing up every cranny!

We encouraged the children of the place to play about our garden—the *geishas* also had the freedom of our little house and grounds where they were completely at home. Owing to them and to the *mousmees* who had come with us from Yokohama, we never lacked female society or had reason to regret not seeing any Europeans.

For weeks, indeed, we caught only occasional glimpses of the few tourists who put up at the primitive kind of hotel which was then in existence.

At Yokohama we had met some men we had known at home and at Tokio had been entertained at lunch by Mr. Bryan Clarke-

KIMI SAN



TOIO SAN







Thornhill of the British Legation—a cultured collector of beautiful things and an authority upon the art, customs and history of the countries he had visited during his diplomatic career. Otherwise we lived with our native entourage more or less in native style.

We did our best to avoid having our æsthetic susceptibilities outraged by the sight of Japanese ladies in unbecoming Western dress. On one occasion, indeed, I was horrified to see what appeared to be a queer little caricature of a European child in red stockings and hideous shoes hovering about in our garden. On enquiry I found that a proud mother in Nikko, having acquired a European costume for her little girl had sent the little thing round in order that we might admire her.

“Compliment to you, Sar. Thought you like to see Japanese child Western style,” said our *maitre d’hôtel*.

I proceeded to explain that such compliments were not at all to my taste.

“Take it away, and never let me see such an atrocity again.”

An hour later the nice little *mousmee* in her own pretty and becoming native dress came to show that she had abandoned the noxious costume and after that, none of the children or girls of Nikko ever attempted to appear in anything but the charming, healthful and appropriate costume which for so many generations has set off the charms of the womankind of Japan.

Toio San and Kimi San were very pleasant, as well as ornamental, little people to have about the place. Always smiling and good tempered they were much interested in some of the things we had brought with us from Europe.

Toio San, however, had one or two tricks which it was difficult to correct. She could not, for instance, resist blunting one’s razors by using them to shave her eyebrows into a becoming curve. She also occasionally smashed the looking-glass out of my dressing case, and, worst crime of all, which profoundly shocked her relative, our *maitre d’hôtel*, she more than once soiled

the spotless purity of our mats by carelessly bringing a wet umbrella indoors.

This last outrage was so grave that Uyeda talked of sending a telegram to Toio San's father in Yokohama begging him to exert his paternal authority in the direction of commanding the *mousmee* to lead a more orderly life. As in face of this terrible threat the little lady assumed a contrite attitude and after a number of prostrations of a traditional kind, vowed that nothing of the sort should ever occur again, she was eventually pardoned, after which she received a little present to banish the "extreme sadness" which, according to her half-tearful statement, the thought of her wrong-doing had produced.

As for Kimi San, she did little else but giggle and occasionally utter little surprised squeals when anything took her fancy. Both she and Toio San, though of comparatively humble origin, were not at all badly educated. The latter could draw quite nicely in a quaint sort of fashion, and was perfectly well acquainted with the stories and legends of her country.

Well do I remember how together we looked at an illustrated version of the story of the forty-seven faithful \*Ronins who, true unto death, gave their lives in order to avenge the Daimio who had been their feudal lord.

Before coming to Nikko we had all made a pilgrimage to Sengakuji, near Tokio, where the Ronins lie buried around the tomb of the chief they served so well.

As I turned over the pictures of this old world story, Toio San exhibited a keen appreciation of the various vicissitudes of the faithful retainers and when we came to the last scene of all, the *hara-kiri* or ceremonial suicide of the forty seven, after their vengeance had been fulfilled, a soft little cry of "*Taxan Shimpai*" (very sad) showed how poignantly this tale of old Japan appealed to the little *mousmee's* mind.

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\* Ronins (wavemen) were *Samurai* who having lost their feudal lord drifted hither and thither like the waves of the sea.

It was during our stay in Japan that a native fanatic made an attempt on the life of the Czarewitch (afterwards the ill-fated Nicholas II) who was then on a tour. The attempt in question, though it failed might almost have been interpreted as an omen of the disaster which overtook the victim's country in the war which broke out some years later.

At the time of the attack, however, the Japanese were considerably perturbed, their idea being that Russia, with the powerful forces at her command, might seek a revenge which Japan as yet was not strong enough to prevent them from taking.

After a stay of some weeks at Nikko we decided to proceed to the ancient capital, Kioto. On our arrival at this city where the Mikados had their abode before the restoration of 1868, we went to Yami's hotel, a hostelry fitted up to accommodate Europeans.

Both my friend and myself, however, soon got tired of being surrounded by globe-trotters, and accordingly we instructed our *maitre d'hôtel* to discover some other resting-place where we could spend our time amid congenial surroundings. A day or two later we were installed in a Japanese hotel which was to some extent suited to Western needs. Here we were allotted rooms in part of the house which was furnished with beds, chairs and other conveniences. There was a spacious courtyard, on the other side of which lived a number of Japanese who, as far as I could make out, never went to bed at all. Anyhow, one heard the music of the *samisen* most of the night.

Though the only foreigners in the house, we were treated with every consideration and courtesy. We lunched and dined in a semi-European coffee room, the menu written in curious French, being always of a most elaborate character. Though it usually comprised a large number of dishes, there was, sad to relate, seldom much we were able to eat. Medlars, jam and sardines were what we were often reduced to, not that the hotel proprietor failed to do his best, but in those days the food in Japan,

except to people accustomed to native dishes, was very unsatisfactory.

The following is the menu of a native dinner as taken from a note-book in which I put down the dishes as they were served :

“ Sweets (balls of sugar with jam).

Soup, containing fish and several other dubious things.

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Chestnut omelet, sugar cakes, beans and seaweed.

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Jam and unleavened cakes.

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Lobster and small oranges.

---

Raw fish, cut up.

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Peaches and oranges.”

The drink was *sake* of the most superior kind served warm in the usual little cups.

Our Japanese hotelkeeper at Kioto was a character with whom I made great friends and many a ramble did we indulge in together. He knew the night life of Kioto very well. As far as I could make out, he had not been much bitten by the craze for Western ways popular with many of his countrymen.

Now and then he would appear in a frock coat and bowler hat, but his usual costume was the kimono. On a very hot day, however, I have known him wear little besides a loin cloth. Part of his charm, indeed, lay in the variety of his attire which once, I remember, took the form of a blanket, spring-sided boots and rather battered straw hat.

A great admirer of the fair sex, he enjoyed life to the full. He was a real pleasure lover and, on evenings when he stayed at home, often had *geishas* to entertain him. The *samisen*, in our hotel, indeed, could be heard far into the night.

What with nocturnal rambles in strange quarters of Kioto with this jolly Japanese and strolls in the daytime with Toio San and her companion, I got to know the city pretty well. There was much of interest to see in the way of beautiful old buildings, while the miniature gardens attached to some of the private houses were very attractive. The latter, which are essentially Japanese, are never successfully imitated in Europe. On one occasion an Englishman who had taken great trouble to produce what he thought was the real thing in the grounds of a club near London, got the Japanese Ambassador to come down and see it.

"Wonderful!" said the latter, to a crowd of members anxious for an expert opinion. Proceeding to compliment his host upon the success of his horticultural efforts he wound up by saying, "I can assure you we have nothing like it in Japan."

Kioto, at the time of my visit, had scarcely been affected by Western influences, its amusements remained much the same as in days of yore. We often went to the "theatre Street," where plays, mostly tragedies, were enacted. A feature of such performances was the great amount of gore with which the performers were bespattered. Bladders of bullock's blood were concealed beneath elaborate robes, so that when, as frequently happened, someone was killed with a sword or knife, a great stream shot out on to the stage.

Toio San, though the gentlest little thing imaginable, seemed quite pleased at such scenes. Though she herself would never have killed a fly, the most sanguinary murders left her quite unmoved. Often we would go into a street which was a bazaar for all sorts of pretty and tasteful odds and ends. Here I would give our little ladies a few *yen* to buy any trifles they might fancy. They would come away highly delighted with their modest purchases, and never wasted their money.

Toio San and Kimi San always wore Japanese dress, dark-coloured silk kimonos with beautiful *obis* or girdles; I had taken

care that their costume should be of the very finest quality. Their hair was also done in elaborate native style, a considerable space of time being devoted to hairdressing at certain fixed periods every week.

Only one foreign innovation marred the artistic perfection of their appearance, which was the silk umbrella of Western design which each of the two insisted on carrying. In vain I would entreat Toio San to go and buy one of the picturesque Japanese umbrellas which so well accord with the native costume. Usually docile to a degree, on this point she was absolutely adamant.

"Why," said I to our *maitre d'hôtel*, "won't lady carry Japanese umbrella which is so pretty?"

"Lady no think so," he would reply. "Japanese ladies like Western style," and when I suggested that he should try and influence the *mousmee* in the required direction, he merely rejoined, "Sorry, Sar, cannot do."

All my efforts were in vain, and as in most contests between the sexes, the lady got her way, she consented, however, to carry a Japanese umbrella in a photograph.

We occasionally went to see *geishas* dance, Kioto being celebrated for that sort of thing. The prettiest thing I saw there in this line was the "*Miakodori*," or Cherry Dance, a veritable dream of grace and beauty which conveys an impression entirely different from any other play or ballet I have ever witnessed anywhere else. The dance in question, which is mainly made up of slow motions and graceful posturing, is danced to a somewhat plaintive but haunting tune.

Performed by a considerable number of specially trained girls, the "*Miakodori*" is comparatively modern, having, I believe, only been invented about 1828, whereas many of the *geisha* dances are of considerable antiquity.

All forms of terpsichore in Japan are more or less classic, many being regulated by rules and usages of immemorial age.

Before the craze for Western ways had impaired traditions and vulgarized so much that was beautiful, an evening's entertainment at a daimio's castle must have been a veritable æsthetic joy to the eye, with its crowd of girls and dancers dressed in finely embroidered kimonos so made that every movement of the wearers produced artistic folds which gave them the appearance of dainty statuettes.

Happily, though the daimios and their ladies have gone, classical tradition in the matter of costume is still followed by the higher class of *geisha*. The very existence of the latter, however, has been threatened, the meddlesome Puritanism of the West having made several attempts to get the professional dancing girl abolished. Some of our Anglo-Saxon prudes would, no doubt, like the place of these beautiful little creatures to be taken by gaunt women police.

Long may the dainty *geisha* survive !

On leaving Kioto we went to Kobe and thence by steamer back to Yokohama. The sea during this voyage, in the way of roughness, easily beat the Channel at its worst. People inclined to be seasick should not take this trip. Having reached our destination we proceeded to make arrangements for our return, via America. We had passed many months in Japan and seen a good deal of the people and country for besides having lived for some time at Nikko and Kioto we had visited the Lake of Hakone and stayed at a number of villages and towns, including Odawara where a ruined daimio's castle attested the ruthless destruction of these ancient strongholds on the restoration to supreme power of the Mikado in 1868.

I also visited Nagoya which contains one of the few castles of this kind which have been preserved in good repair. We were shown round the interior of this magnificent and picturesque building by a custodian in monstrous European boots, ill-cut pea jacket and cloth cap. It would have been more fitting as



well as more dignified had the guardian of such a beautiful relic of the past been clothed in his national dress. Many years however, will probably have to elapse before the Japanese realize the vulgar barbarity of having discarded their own picturesque costumes in favour of the Western garb which robs their men—and to a greater extent their women—of the graceful dignity which was the national heritage of old Japan.

The whole aspect of the towns and even the villages of the land of the "Rising Sun," tinged as they were by Western influence of a material kind and filled with men too often arrayed in kimonos, spring-sided boots and bowler hats, reminded one of some beautiful work of oriental art confided to the care of a wayward child who, having utilized odds and ends from his playbox was ruthlessly robbing it of its ancient charm.

Nevertheless much that was attractive still remained for Nature always makes a brave fight against vandal hands. Beautiful Enoshima for instance—the island which at certain tides is a peninsula, was one of our favourite resorts. Here I once saw a couple of fishermen with their hair dressed in a *quen* on the tops of their head in the ancient fashion. When the craze for imitating Europe was at its height, this mode universal in old Japan had been forbidden and it was said to have become quite obsolete.

*Partir c'est mourir un peu*, and there must always be a certain feeling of sadness in leaving a beautiful country which one knows one will probably never see again. Nevertheless we were fairly cheerful as we neared the moment of departure. Toio San, who had left us at Kyoto, came to say good-bye and was presented with a souvenir—then followed a last clasp of a soft little hand and then that pretty but pathetic word "*Sayonara*."

Uyeda, our *maitre d'hôtel*, in his most dignified style, bade us farewell on the steamer and shortly after we were steaming away towards San Francisco.

Mr. Douglas Sladen, a clever man and well-known author, was on board and made himself most agreeable. The majority of the passengers seemed to be American. I had been very indisposed ever since I left Kioto and during the journey was for a time not well enough to leave my cabin.

The ship only carried a medical student by way of doctor, but the latter seemed to me to be just as good as a fully qualified practitioner. Besides this he was most attentive; I trust that this clever young American got on, he well deserved to do so.

We stayed at San Francisco about ten days and saw most of the things worth seeing there. Our hotel—the Palace—was then the biggest hotel in the world. Four hundred people could dine comfortably in one of the dining rooms to which was attached a black attendant who, though there were no tickets or numbers, was celebrated for never having made a mistake as to giving people their own cloaks, coats or hats.

The Palace was destroyed by the earthquake—or fire—as the residents of San Francisco euphemistically call it and another hotel has taken its place. As a matter of fact after the city had been rebuilt, few traces of the great catastrophe were to be seen.

Californian fruit, I remember, was glorious to look at but not so good as it looked. The cable cars which we had not seen in Europe were a novelty.

From San Francisco we went through to New York, stopping on our way at Denver, Chicago, Salt Lake City, and other places, and incidentally getting wonderful views on an observation car in the Rocky mountains. After our old world life at Nikko and Kioto, everyone seemed to be in a terrible hurry.

I was not a long time in America but most of the things I saw there were pretty much what I expected they would be. Enormously tall houses, elaborate trains, gigantic hotels—architectural and engineering triumphs of every sort—and an almost fierce craving to be up-to-date.

Everything, however, seemed so very very new. One missed the old buildings and the evidences of past generations which are fairly abundant in most European towns.

The people we met were most kind and anxious to do all they could for us. The Americans, indeed, are noted for their hospitality towards English visitors.

The mania for rushing frantically about, however, seemed almost universal—what was it all for? I thought of the old Persians and their contempt for the unrest of the modern world.

We only made a short stay in New York but found time to dine at Delmonico's, which, I believe, has since migrated from its original site. It was then, with justice, considered one of the best restaurants in the world.

I should rather have liked to have seen more of the great city, but having booked cabins on the *Umbria*, we were obliged to sail and in due course steamed away from Bartholdi's statue of Liberty which stands looking out to sea for the freedom no longer to be found in the land of Prohibition, on which, it so appropriately, turns its back.

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## CHAPTER XI



## CHAPTER XI

Paris in the "nineties."—Durand's.—Mr. Blowitz.—An interesting lunch.—The end of General Boulanger.—Modern restaurants.—Boldi.—Funeral of President Carnot.—Bohemian anarchists.—Russian grand dukes.—Anecdote.—The Parisian *cocotte*.—Her rapacity.—An epigram of Emile Augier.—The "Old Guard."—The *Folies Bergères* and *Moulin Rouge*.—The extinct *grisette*.—Professional dancers.—*La Goulue* and *Grille d'Egout*.—The power of female beauty.—Fickle Parisians.—The Dreyfus case.—Decadence of the boulevards.—Their noise.—The *Palais Royal*.—Modern gambling regulations.—Monte Carlo.—Lord Salisbury's visit to the casino.

I WAS a good deal in Paris during the "nineties" at which period it was already manifesting the tendency observed in other cities to move West. Building was going on in the neighbourhood of the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs Élysées becoming a busy thoroughfare.

The old careless life of the *Boulevardier* had ended after 1870 when old Parisians complained that the joyous days and merry nights had gone for ever. Gay young sparks of the "fifties" and "sixties" sobered down into staid old men. Their life lay not in the future, but in the past. They lamented the time when the Avenue de l'Impératrice was full of well-appointed carriages and great landaus, filled with rank, fashion, and gilded frivolity.

The Boulevard which they considered as a social lounge, has now ceased to exist. Gone are the days when it was wont to inspire the writers and wits of Paris as was the case when they were wont to meet at Tortoni's. Up to the war of 1870 what was known as "the Boulevards" only included the Boulevard Montmartre and the Boulevard des Italiens.

Now the real Boulevard is fast becoming the Champs Élysées which, crowned by Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe—a gate opening on the infinite—offers a gay and alluring line of brilliantly lit shops, hotels and places of entertainment.

The lighting of modern Paris, brilliant in the extreme is, indeed, considered by the Parisians one of the attractions of their beautiful city. Light promotes gaiety and life which is perhaps why London at night has a tendency to look gloomy and dull. The modern English, however, rather appear to like darkness.

Speaking of the brilliant illumination of Paris, a critic said, "Nobody who saw the Place de la Concorde during the war will ever forget its magic beauty."

It is somewhat difficult to forget what cannot have been seen, for without lights this fine open space presented little more than a vista of darkness. Moreover the Place de la Concorde was designed to be lit up and any mysterious picturesqueness which it may have acquired when darkened is more than compensated for by the gaiety of its myriad lights.

On the other hand a great drawback of modern Paris is its noise which practically never stops while the thunder of the huge omnibuses which run in a never-ending stream have destroyed the amenities of a stroll along the great thoroughfares. Paris, however, has always been noisier than London, as Alphonse Daudet remarked years ago. The difference in this respect, however, has become far more marked since his day.

In the "nineties" cafés still remained which carried on the old-fashioned traditions of a past age. A number had no carpet, but a sanded floor, while the habitués sat at marble-topped tables, over which a tablecloth was spread at meal times. Several restaurants had a dog which roamed about the establishment as if it were its lord and master.

At Durand's, Place de la Madeleine, a medium-sized brown-coloured animal of uncertain lineage reigned supreme. Of casual

visitors he took not the slightest notice, but, with regular clients, he would condescend to pass the time of day. Though aristocratic in his ways, he adhered to the principles of the Great Revolution. On his collar was inscribed :

“ *Chocolat—chien philosophe,  
Ni Dieu, Ni Maître.*”

Durand's, frequented at that time by most of the prominent personages of Paris, had enjoyed great repute about 1840 and again under the Second Empire.

In 1867, five kings are said to have supped together at this restaurant in a *cabinet particulier*, and, at the conclusion of the banquet, discovered that not one of their majesties had money enough about him to pay for his supper.

After various vicissitudes it passed into the hands of a capable *restaurateur* who restored its fortunes and made it once again a typically Parisian resort. There I met Gaston Calmette, then quite a young man, but giving promise in his conversation of the gifts which carried him to the editorial chair of the *Figaro*, sitting in which he was shot dead by Madame Caillaux.

I never saw Mr. Blowitz the celebrated *Times* correspondent at Durand's, though some time later I met him at another Parisian restaurant at a dinner given by the late Lord Moulton who was a rare instance of a man combining the highest intellectual qualities with a great knowledge and appreciation of good food. On that occasion, Blowitz, though well on in years, showed an extraordinary amount of conversational vivacity. He had with him, if I recollect rightly, a French nephew who seemed to me to possess much of the high mental development which distinguished his uncle.

At Durand's the staff of the British Embassy at one time had a sort of mess, the arrangement being, that for a very moderate sum any member could have a very excellent lunch.



Foreigners were comparatively scarce, the atmosphere being entirely French, and there was little to attract exotic millionaires. Nor were there many *cocottes*, though certain of the smart *horizontales*, such as la Belle Otero, and Madame Liane de Pongy, occasionally put in an appearance.

Many a Parisian *viveur*, however, made a practice of dining there with his *petite amie*, for whom the proprietor, Monsieur Sylvain, always had a pretty little compliment. After the good old fashion, this delightful man made a point of chatting with his clients, with many of whom he was on excellent terms.

Though I was an Englishman, he appreciated my great affection for France, and we became the best of friends. Almost every evening I used to dine at his establishment, generally leaving the dinner to him. Soup, fish, an entrée or bird, together with a sweet, some admirable coffee, a bottle of wine, generally champagne, and liqueurs—all this for two, as far as I can remember, very rarely exceeded thirty francs.

Delightful dinners they were, with practically everything to make one realize the joy of being alive. The time came when Monsieur Sylvain decided to retire, and having bought a property at Brie Comte Robert, he began to bid farewell to his clients. When this decision became known, everyone in the restaurant, including Chocolat, became depressed. Monsieur Sylvain, however, declared that his retirement would not affect matters as the new proprietor, to whom we were all introduced, would keep everything going as usual.

One evening before his departure the old Frenchman told me he would esteem it a great pleasure if I would lunch with him in one of the private rooms upstairs, and a couple of days later I found myself alone with him, eating the best of food and drinking the rarest of wines. We began lunch about half-past twelve, and I know I did not leave before four.

Everything was delicious, the meal being on the most lavish scale possible. In the course of it, my host, somewhat after the

style of the characters described by Fielding, told me the story of his life. He pictured the hardships of a childhood in a peasant's family, when he and two brothers had eaten their meals out of three bowls, if bowls they could be called, scooped out of a long piece of stone which served as a table. He spoke of his early hard struggles as a young man in Paris, and of his life as a waiter during which he had managed to save enough to obtain a share in the small café behind the Opera House, which in time, developed into the well-known night resort, the Café Sylvain. Having successfully disposed of the latter, he had purchased Durand's, at that time in rather low water, and, as I have said, made it one of the most prosperous restaurants in Paris.

He talked much of the strange people he had come across during his career and then went off into a long dissertation upon the Boulangist movement. Durand's had been the headquarters of General Boulanger and his followers, and the private room in which we were lunching was the one in which, on a certain fateful evening, the General, after dinner, had addressed the populace, and then, instead of going out into the street and marching on the Élysée, had tamely put on his hat and coat and gone home to bed.

"*Il a pris sa canne et son pardessus—alors j'ai compris que c'était fini,*" said Monsieur Sylvain, who had been a witness of the whole scene.

As a matter of fact the General, unlike his supporters, knew that disaster must attend any attempt to march on the Élysée. Behind its gates was a regiment absolutely staunch to the Republic, while the garrison of Paris, as he had been informed, were on the whole hostile to the movement which Boulanger led.

I remembered the old days at the *Café des Ambassadeurs* and the frenzied applause evoked by Paulus when in "*En revenant de la revue,*" he sang "*Moi je ne faisais qu'acclamer le brave General Boulanger.*"

Now "Tunis," the famous black charger which had carried the popular hero so gallantly at the Longchamps review had become a cab horse and the General, who had perished by his own hand on the grave of his love, Madame de Bonnemain, lay in the cemetery of Ixelles, near Brussels, "*A Bientôt Marguerite*," on his tombstone.

Durand's, though a new proprietor took it over after M. Sylvain's retirement, has now long ceased to exist, the premises having been rebuilt and devoted to other purposes.

The best of the old Parisian restaurants catered mainly for men. Women, it is true, frequented them, but not in any great numbers; the whole aim and object of these establishments being to minister to male greediness. There were gourmets who had their own particular table, much as at a club. The advent of a new era when men ceased to care to dine alone, or with companions of their own sex, inflicted a severe blow upon first-class cookery. Noise and menus without originality drove old clients away. While culinary perfection disappeared, prices continued to rise. The craze for music and dancing inflicted the final blow. To-day, of the many small and excellent restaurants of thirty years ago, not more than two or three exist.

Among these is Voisin's, in the Rue St. Honoré, the style and decoration of which remain unaltered. The same, however, can scarcely be said of its prices which are quite up-to-date.

Another old-fashioned, but excellent restaurant, La Peyrouse, on the other side of the river, still flourishes. The little rooms here, especially the salons upstairs, are well worth attention, as showing the style of decoration popular with Parisian *Sybarites* of another age.

It is a quiet place, on the Quai Malaquais, far removed from the noise and rattle of the modern city across the Seine, the neighbourhood abounding in memories of old Paris. "*Là bas*,"

said the proprietor to me, "*il y a le jazzband et la musique Americaine—ici le calme et la poésie.*"

The *Tour d'Argent* on the same side of the Seine for a time enjoyed great popularity with fashionable visitors from England after whom the proprietor was in the habit of naming specially concocted new dishes.

Of late years the charges of some of the restaurants popular with well-to-do foreigners have become quite ridiculous. This is largely the fault of Americans who seldom protest. The French give such places a wide birth, not caring to be robbed.

A couple of vivacious Parisians, however, once gave an extortionate *restaurateur* a good lesson. Having procured one of his menus with prices affixed, they got facsimiles printed, the prices, however, being reduced by two-thirds. Having told everyone that the particular restaurant had lowered its prices, they had an early dinner and contrived to substitute their own menus for those of the house.

A number of diners arrived.

"Waiter," said one, "bring me a truffled turkey. What, only four francs, wonderful!"

"Some salmon," cried another, busily engaged in devouring his second partridge, priced on the menu at seventy-five centimes, and salmon at one franc. Great good humour prevailed.

When the time to pay came, the most extravagantly comical discussions arose between the waiters and the customers. Menus were produced and compared, everyone got indignant, every table was the scene of a dispute. At last the owner of the restaurant was summoned; when he saw the prices he opened his eyes in astonishment. He admitted he was powerless, and not knowing whom to blame, ended by groaning and declaring that he would most certainly be ruined. Eventually a compromise was effected by which clients paid something between the two prices.

Up to the end of the last century there was rarely music in restaurants at lunch or dinner. In the "nineties," however, Maire's on the Boulevard de Strasbourg, inaugurated the fashion of a *tzigane* band at supper, and here it was that the well-known Boldi first came before the Parisian public. A well-mannered man, his practice of strolling among the tables and playing on his violin to any pretty ladies, must have brought him in a good deal of money.

Just before the war he conducted a *tzigane* orchestra at the Ritz, where he was a well-known figure, preening himself and bowing like an elderly peacock.

A young Hungarian relative of Boldi's, who was a very talented musician, once conducted a band at the Carlton in London. He died quite young, and is buried at Monte Carlo, that beautiful spot which is no unfitting resting-place for those who have ministered to the pleasure-loving world.

Brébant's, towards the end of the last century, was another restaurant which was essentially Parisian. At one time I went there a good deal and had many agreeable dinners in the *cabinets particuliers* upstairs. Rather old-fashioned in their style of decoration, these little rooms had, as the names scratched on the looking glasses testified, seen many lovers come and go.

The delights of a *tête-à-tête* supper at Brébant's formed the subject of many a café concert ditty. In former days, Parisian *chanteurs* and *chanteuses* were much given to chanting the charms of various resorts, identified not only with excellent cooking, but also with what sometimes passes for love.

*"Je vous promets des délices  
Et je suis loin d'être flatteur,  
Nous mangerons des écrivisses,  
Aux Café des Ambassadeurs."*

While I went to Paris mainly for the purpose of amusement, I always took a warm interest in the more serious side of life in

the gay capital. A constant visitor to the museums, especially the *Carnavalet* and the *Cluny*, I neglected no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the social and architectural history of Paris throughout the ages.

I, myself, witnessed a historic sight, the funeral of President Carnot. The procession was so long that the end of it never reached *Notre Dame* at all. Great apprehension prevailed that the anarchists might make a demonstration and the military authorities were prepared for any eventuality.

Sadi Carnot, a grandson of Carnot the organizer of victory, endowed oddly enough with a countenance of rather a Persian type, had not the appearance of a lucky man. On the *Grand Prix* day at Longchamps, I remember noticing his sad, almost melancholy look. He was a good President, and partly no doubt on account of his name, which recalled the glorious exploits of the Republican armies, enjoyed a greater popularity than had been the lot of his predecessor.

For some time after his assassination, stringent precautions were taken to protect public men in France. I remember seeing Casimir Perier driving along the Boulevard closely surrounded by a large escort of *Cuirassiers*, each man near the carriage holding a loaded revolver in his right hand. Altogether an extraordinary state of affairs prevailed.

A curious atmosphere of unrest pervaded Paris, and certain writers and poets for a time seemed disposed to coquette with anarchy—as a matter of fact the Bohemians of the gay capital have always hated the *bourgeoisie*. This probably is largely caused by the contemptuous attitude of so many business men towards artists and writers whom they regard as mere idlers doing no real work.

Willette, the clever and original French artist, referring to middle-class indifference to art, tells a story of how he met a portly financier who, after enquiring if he still went in for painting

said, " Well, when are you going to give up idling and become serious ? " This at a time when the unfortunate young artist, in order to keep body and soul together, was working like a galley slave, decorating cafés for miserable pay !

A slight consolation for such a state of affairs is that even the humblest artist or writer, if his work is worth anything at all, stands a good chance of being admired or read by future generations, while the majority of business men are speedily and utterly forgotten. " Business," which, as a witty Frenchman said, " is merely juggling with other people's money," interests only those whom it immediately concerns, nor does it make the slightest call upon the high intellectual qualities of the human brain.

In spite of all this and the gross arrogance which not infrequently pertains to people concerned with finance, from a purely material point of view, without business men the world would probably be in a worse state than with them. This is evident from what has happened in Bolshevik Russia which, part prison, part lunatic asylum, well illustrates the inevitable results of setting anarchy in the place of order.

Though there has been no attempt to interfere with personal liberty in Paris, the old-fashioned night restaurants do not enjoy the same vogue as they did in the days before the Great War.

With the craze for dancing the character of such places has somewhat changed, besides which all nocturnal amusement has more or less become concentrated in Montmartre. A number of night resorts which flourished on the Boulevards were in the past patronized by visitors of very exalted rank.

Russian Grand Dukes in particular often supped in their queer little private rooms. Before the war every sort of Grand Ducal eccentricity was tolerated, the police keeping a watchful eye to prevent such august visitors from getting into serious

trouble. One of the wealthiest and most important of these august strangers, however, once got into a very awkward predicament.

Having supped not wisely but too well with a couple of casual female acquaintances in a *cabinet particulier* at a night restaurant, deep slumber overcame him. The ladies, having in vain attempted to awake their host, finally decided to make a move. Before going, however, they annexed all his personal possessions, including his clothes which they made up into a parcel and took away.

One thing only did they leave him—his white tie. This they tied in a neat bow round his neck, after which they glided quietly downstairs. An hour or two having elapsed, the *maitre d'hôtel* ventured to go and see whether his visitor (of whose identity he was unaware) had any idea of leaving. Opening the door, what was his surprise to find a stark naked figure snoring heavily on the sofa.

"The time has come to pay the bill," said he, tapping the prostrate form on the shoulder, "we do not like such jokes in our restaurant."

"Nor do I," replied the Grand Duke, who, having woke up, ruefully realized his very insufficient clothing.

"Pay the five hundred francs you owe and we will say nothing more about the matter, Monsieur," rejoined the *maitre d'hôtel*.

"How can I pay five hundred francs when, as you see, I have nothing but a white tie? Get me some clothes at once and I will send you the money to-morrow, I am the Grand Duke . . ."

"Grand Duke fiddlesticks," was the reply, "that story won't do for us."

In the end the police were sent for. They wrapped the Grand Duke in an old tablecloth, put him in a cab and announced their



intention of taking him to the police station. On the way, however, they were persuaded to stop at the Russian Embassy, where matters were quickly put right and the Grand Duke furnished with proper attire.

Before the Great War the Parisian press devoted a good deal of space to the chronicling of Grand Ducal doings. In the more frivolous papers there was almost as much about them as about the fair but frail damsels to whose charms they were, it was said, wont to succumb.

The pranks of the higher class of *cocotte* indeed, have always intermittently been commented upon in periodicals like the "*Journal Amusant*" and "*Vie Parisienne*." Highly spiced anecdotes about such ladies still occasionally appear even in the daily Press.

In the "nineties" all these anecdotes and jokes mainly turned upon the same pivot—the poor thing's chronic want of money! As a matter of fact, such gibes were pretty well justified, for most of the sisterhood never let slip any opportunity of adding to their gains.

If you took one of them out to dinner and commented upon the playing of the band, she would turn the conversation upon her fondness for music, just now sadly hampered by the dilapidated state of her piano. It ended, of course, by your handing over a sum to put the instrument in order. If the restaurant was cold she would turn the conversation on the present ridiculously cheap price of furs, if hot, on the pressing necessity of a Parisienne having a pretty fan. Gloves she always forgot, it being in those days, when shops did not close till late, much more convenient to get an admirer to send out for them. The whole energies of these Juliets of a night, indeed, were concentrated upon getting as much as possible out of their Romeos, and either by wheedling or pertinacity they generally succeeded in their design

To-day the Parisian *cocotte*, though keen enough upon getting money, seems to have rather slackened in her solicitude for small profits. In the lounges of Parisian music-halls, however, obliging ladies still entreat visitors to buy them boxes of chocolates or bouquets of flowers, but this is a regular practice run upon true commercial lines. If thirty francs is paid for a box of sweets the girl receiving it can always obtain fifteen francs on handing it back to the vendor when her admirer has gone.

The same system, more or less, applies to everything sold at these places, the presents purchased by good-natured strangers being really nothing but coupons which pass backwards and forwards between the saleswoman and the *cocotte*, and vice versa.

The class mentioned above has since the war greatly moderated the rather flamboyant eccentricity of dress which once distinguished the sisterhood. As a matter of fact it is now rather hard to tell who is a *cocotte* and who isn't.

"*Ainsi que la vertu, le vice a ses degrés*," as Emile Augier (much to her disgust) wrote in the album of the Paiva after she had built a magnificent staircase in her sumptuous mansion, and there are many grades of Parisian *cocotte* ranging from the hatless drab of the Boulevard Extérieur to the jewelled Hetaira speeding to Longchamps in a Rolls Royce.

Since the Great War, however, the old style of smart *courtizan* seems more or less to have disappeared. Well do I remember seeing her driving in the Bois before the days of motors. Too often fat and unattractive, but always covered with jewels, not a few of these ladies belonged to the Old Guard who had survived from the days of the Second Empire.

A notorious lady of this kind was la Baronne d'Ange who might have been seen driving a dogcart every afternoon. Not a few of these women, besides possessing fine equipages, lived in magnificent houses where they held a sort of *salon*.

A less exalted class displayed itself at restaurants where, though rarely young or good-looking, the ladies in question seldom lacked well-to-do admirers.

Since the war, however, a younger and less professional looking *cocotte* appears to have taken their place, the Old Guard, it is said, having to a large extent emigrated to the Argentine or retired to the country. Anyhow they are gone and though a number of them were said to be amusing conversationalists, the more slim and sprightly ladies who have taken their place from a decorative point of view at least, are a decided improvement. Unlike their predecessors they do not have a regular hour for parading themselves in the Bois where at one time the smart *cocottes* of the Second Empire, then called *ruineuses*, vied in the splendour of their equipages with the great ladies of the Court and the foreign Ambassadors, just as, before the Great Revolution, La Morphise vied with the Duchesse de Valentinois. All this sort of thing has disappeared, the smart *cocotte* of to-day, however, generally has a well appointed motor.

One of the chief haunts of the more humble *fille de joie* in the past was the *Folies Bergères* which, except for a certain amount of renovation, remains more or less unchanged to-day. In the "eighties" and "nineties," however, a rival in the way of popularity with British and American tourists was the *Moulin Rouge*, frequented by high-kicking stars who danced eccentric quadrilles.

Since those days it has been burnt down and a new building with the same name occupies the site.

The *Élysée Montmartre* was also formerly much frequented by the fair and frail, but at the *Bal Bullier* students and their sweethearts, to some degree, maintained the traditional gaiety associated with that resort.

The *grisette*, however, had long disappeared. I always wondered whether she had ever existed as she was described by the romantic writers of forty years before.

Albert Smith, who had been a medical student in Paris, spoke of the *grisette* as pretty and pleasant, and declared that her highest ambition in the way of dress was to possess half a dozen pairs of white thread stockings of English manufacture. Some years were to elapse before Mr. Cobden and the Treaty of Commerce gave facilities to the *grisette* for gratifying her ambition in this direction, but by that time there were very few *grisettes* left to covet stockings of thread at all, the *grisettes'* successors on the other side of the Seine being more apt to hanker after hose of pink or pearly-grey silk.

Albert Smith, however, touched but lightly upon the ethics of the *grisette* which it would appear were somewhat similar to those of Du Maurier's immortal "Trilby." The morals of Lisette, as painted by Béranger from time to time, certainly leave something to be desired. Still the poet is careful to draw a tangible distinction between his beloved Lisette and Frétilion, "*la bonne fille*," to say nothing of "*ces demoiselles*," who, after Waterloo, had uttered the famous *complainte*:

*"Faut que Lor Vilainton ait tout pris;  
G'na plus d'argent dans c'gueux de Paris."*

In the days when jazz dancing was as yet unknown there was another kind of lady whose existence was not ignored by the Parisian Press. This was the professional *can can* dancer, a number of whom were known by queer names. La Goulue, Grille d'Egout, Nini *pattes en l'air*, la Sauterelle, Melinite, and others all had their days of celebrity in the "eighties" and "nineties."

Drawn as a rule from a somewhat low class, these ladies were more often noted for their acrobatic contortions and high-kicking than for their beauty or wit, still they were occasionally not unamusing at a supper party. La Goulue was, I remember, essentially a daughter of the people, while her dancing com-

panion, Grille d'Egout, rather pretty, was a trifle more reserved and sedate—both, however, were of a Rabelaisian turn of mind. The former's dancing days being over, she now acts as a wild beast tamer at fairs still popular in Paris and all over France. When the Jardin de Paris was done away with and the ground it occupied restored to the *Champs Élysées* to which it originally belonged, the *quadrille eccentric* or *can can* lost most of the popularity which it had for years enjoyed. It is still danced, however, at the Bal Tabarin in Montmartre and one or two other places, but in these days people wanting to dance themselves, care little about seeing elaborate quadrilles executed by professionals.

Gone are the days when celebrated dancers like Pomaré and Mogador were able to draw all Paris to Mabilie. These ladies, however, were beautiful as well as graceful women, and the Parisian has ever been highly susceptible to the charm of a pretty face.

Female beauty has always exercised enormous influence in France. So much so was this the case at the time of the great Revolution that the authorities issued a decree prohibiting pretty women coming in person to solicit the release of imprisoned aristocrats. When there was laxness about enforcing this regulation, the infamous Hebert made a stern protest.

Upon this a defender of the fair sex set forward that "in the land of Freedom the Public Offices were necessarily open to all; that tastes differed and that a lady might be admitted as ugly by one and rejected by another as pretty, and that young and old, handsome and plain, all might have business to do; and that, in short, public officers could not possibly execute the decree." These reasons, however plausible, did not convince Hebert, who renewed the complaints against these pretty aristocrats—these *Circés*, as he called them to the satisfaction

of the crowd of women, most of them old, and all of them disgusting, who composed a large part of his audience.

Though ready to bow down before pretty women while they are young, the Parisians rarely devote a thought to them once their beauty has passed away. As was strikingly demonstrated after the defeat of Carpentier by a Senegalese, Paris has no pity for a fallen favourite.

Though charming in many ways, the Parisians are fickle, while fierce and pitiless when their indignation against anyone has been aroused. All sense of fairness seems then to leave them and the case of any unpopular culprit is apt to be prejudged to such an extent that those who plead for justice come to be regarded with almost as much hatred as the prisoner himself.

I was in Paris when the Dreyfus case began and well remembered the excitement caused by the public degradation of the unfortunate captain who was stripped of the insignia of his rank.

Feeling ran high in England as to the unjust treatment which Captain Dreyfus was said to have received. One Strand eating-house keeper indeed, was so outraged that he put a notice in his window to the effect that, as long as Dreyfus languished in prison, "no French beans would be sold in his establishment."

One of the main causes of the ruthless persecution to which Captain Dreyfus was subjected seems to have been his intense unpopularity—most of the people who had known him as a young man being apparently of opinion that if he happened not to be guilty, he ought to be.

A distinguished Frenchman who had been at the École Polytechnique with Dreyfus told me that, strolling along the Boulevard one day in company with a friend, who had been his fellow-student at the famous Military school, he suddenly encountered a number of excited newsboys bearing posters inscribed, "Treachery of an Artillery Officer."

"I will wager I know his name," said my friend.

"I too," replied his companion, and both simultaneously cried out "Dreyfus"; and Dreyfus it was—or rather wasn't, for the tardy acquittal of the latter was thorough and honourable.

The Parisians are as fickle about places as they are about people as witness the way in which certain restaurants and pleasure resorts suddenly lose their popularity. The greatest instance of this is the Palais Royal which, after having been a noted centre of gaiety and dissipation, became one of the most gloomy resorts in Europe when the gambling was suppressed.

"The visitor to Paris (said a warning to English people), who is inclined to go to a boarding-house should be very careful to go only to one of respectability; and we feel it our duty to caution the public against a kind of establishment that is apt to deceive foreigners and which has become very prevalent in this capital since the abolition by law of public gambling-houses. Many persons have opened *tables d'hôte* and boarding-houses under cover of which card-playing to a considerable extent is carried on in the evening, and the unwary visitor is easily inveigled to play, and to lose sums to a large amount. They are frequented by persons of both sexes of fashionable exterior, but of very indifferent character."

Though gambling in the Palais Royal was stopped some ninety years ago, public gaming goes on freely at French clubs and casinos.

From time to time gamblers in France are troubled by disquieting rumours. In 1907, for instance, the French Government promulgated a new code of regulations to be enforced at casinos, all of which were closed for two or three days throughout France, an operation which, of course, evoked a mass of unctuous and totally inaccurate comment in England.

That portion of the Press which is ever in favour of restricting personal liberty, congratulated the French upon this effort to

stop every form of that gambling which had, for so many years, shocked English visitors, who would, of course, warmly welcome the stern measures about to be enforced, and flock across the Channel in largely increased numbers.

As a matter of fact, the casinos were closed merely to emphasise the fact that the Government intended to see that the new regulations which they imposed, amongst which was one regulating a tax upon baccarat banks, should be respected. In the end only one small and insignificant casino was permanently closed.

By the decree of June 21, 1907, certain games of chance are permitted at watering-places and health resorts which have been officially recognized as such by the Minister of the Interior, on the representation of the Municipal Council and the Prefect.

The games of pure chance now permitted are two forms of baccarat, ordinary and *chemin de fer*, and La Boule, which has taken the place of *les petits chevaux*, now no longer played.

In the "nineties" I paid several visits to Monte Carlo, most of which, from a financial point of view, were anything but a success. On one occasion having travelled in a sleeping berth numbered 13 arrived in the principality on the 13th day of the month and been given room number 13 at the Hotel de Paris I thought it a good tip to back number 13 at Roulette. The only tip, however, which came off was that of one of my fingers which, in my hurry to get to the casino, I slammed in my bedroom door—number 13 never turned up while I was playing.

By that time Monte Carlo had ceased to be the quiet little place I had known during my first visit in the "eighties." Ciro, who I remembered keeping a tiny little bar in an annexe to the Café de Paris, had developed into a prosperous *restaurateur* and streets and villas had sprung up all over the place.

The quaint little army of the Prince was, however, still in existence—dressed in blue uniforms, *shakos* and *aiguillettes*, his



infantry struck a more picturesque note than the present gendarmes with their hideous *solar topees*. At that time, the *gendarmerie* was a distinct force only on duty in Monte Carlo. It has now assumed the duties formerly performed by the infantry mentioned above and by way, I suppose, of showing that it constitutes the *Monegasque* army has exchanged the graceful little cocked hats which its members formerly wore, for cloth helmets, the hideousness of which baffles description.

Towards the end of the last century the majority of the visitors to Monte Carlo were a good deal smarter, at least in appearance, than those who go there to-day. The casino authorities, indeed, were then rather particular about issuing cards of admission to people who were carelessly dressed.

On one occasion, indeed, Lord and Lady Salisbury, who had come over from their villa at Beaulieu, thinking they would have a look at the rooms, made the necessary application. Lord Salisbury could not have been called a dandy and his wife was dressed in country clothes. Somewhat astonished at being asked to give his name and profession, the former said that he merely happened to be Prime Minister of England.

The officials, being incredulous, treated this statement as a joke, and as a result, the contemplated visit to the gambling rooms did not take place. When the Monte Carlo authorities heard of the affair they were naturally perturbed, and by way of making amends for the *contretemps* sent Lord and Lady Salisbury the best box at the theatre. It was not accepted, however, and, I believe, neither the Prime Minister nor his wife ever set foot in the principality again.

At various times the French Government has been credited with an intention of abolishing the tables, but now that baccarat may be played at spas or watering places provided they be one hundred kilometres from Paris, anything of the sort is extremely unlikely.

This official toleration of gambling is essentially French—it is improbable that such a policy will ever be followed in England. Nevertheless there is something to be said for it—the poor, for instance, benefit by the tax gamblers have to pay.

And after all one's whole life is a gamble in which some lose and some win, though all lose in the end.



## CHAPTER XII



## CHAPTER XII

Rejoin Sir Henry Drummond Wolff as Attaché at Madrid.—Disadvantages of that city.—Bull fights.—Lagartijo's farewell.—Sir Joseph Crowe.—Young *matadors*.—Cock-fighting.—*Pelota*.—Reception of the British Ambassador at the Royal Palace.—The Queen-Mother and Maundy Thursday.—Burgos and Barcelona.—Death of my mother, Lady Dorothy Nevill.—Baron Eckhardstein.—Forebodings of the Great War.—Our craven politicians.—Sir Fairfax Cartwright's prescience.—Gallieni's proclamation to the garrison of Paris.—The victors of the Marne.—Mr. Hugh O'Beirne and Bulgaria.—Absurd rumours.—The Russians in England.—The first Zeppelin raid.—Letter censoring and its humours.—The Military Permit Office.—Naval Intelligence.—Anecdotes of "Secret Service."—The end.

IN the early "nineties," Sir Henry Drummond Wolff having been appointed Ambassador at Madrid, I again joined him as Honorary Attaché. I had rooms in the Embassy which at that time was located in what had once been a Cardinal's house—at least the arms of one could be seen carved on a portion of the stonework. It was a rambling old building, which some years later was abandoned in favour of a new Embassy in a better situation.

Though Madrid provided a number of amenities and amusements of a European capital, it did not seem to me very attractive. At that time, indeed, it had some of the disadvantages of a mediæval city combined with those of a large modern provincial town. The streets were badly paved and there was a good deal of squalor—unlike that of Tehran, however, it was not palliated by anything picturesque.

Besides this the restaurants and hotels had not then been brought up to date. The hotel accommodation is now good, and I believe everything has been improved—possibly I took

rather a jaundiced view of the city, for while there I was always thinking of Paris.

Of the national amusements of the Spanish people I saw a good deal—bull fights, cock fights and the game of *Pelota*. The only redeeming features of the bull fight are the old-world dignity and beauty of the ceremonial entry into the ring and the gallantry shown by the *matadors* who confront and eventually kill the bull.

The slaughter of the horses is horrible and to some extent merely a concession to the love of blood of the spectators. Originally, I believe, the *picadors* were supposed to save their horses from the bull—in modern days, however, the wretched steeds are urged on to his horns, the idea being to tire the animal out.

Another unpleasant feature is that no matter how game a bull may prove himself he is inevitably doomed to death. Considering the lack of bulls capable of putting up an exciting fight, it would surely be wiser to spare an exceptionally brave animal for breeding. The Spaniards, however, are ultra conservative as to their national sports, so bull fighting is likely to remain unchanged.

I often saw the great *matador* Lagartijo, or the Lizard, fight. He was wonderfully brave and agile though getting on in years, but at last realizing that a man who continues too long in the ring has a poor chance of making old bones, he decided to retire. I was present the last time he entered the ring.

For some reason or other that day the bulls were particularly ferocious and Lagartijo was certainly not at his best. Time after time he avoided an infuriated animal by jumping the barrier out of the ring—tactics which aroused hostile cries from the spectators. They ought not to have blamed him, however; he had shown exceptional courage for years and an unwillingness to risk death during his last fight was quite pardonable. Like

most successful bull fighters he was said to have accumulated a large fortune, which no doubt was another reason for his caution.

Many English people go to bull fights and, becoming disgusted at what they see, begin to protest. Everyone must realize that there is cruelty about such a spectacle and sensitive people should stay away. I remember the late Sir Joseph Crowe (father of Sir Eyre Crowe of the Foreign Office) going with me to a fight at Madrid during which he became positively ill. Seeing him looking indisposed, I advised him to leave, which he did. The slaughter of the horses had upset him terribly, and one experience was more than enough for him.

Sir Joseph had come to Spain in connection with negotiations concerning a new commercial treaty. Besides his connection with diplomacy, he was an art expert and writer of considerable repute, he himself being clever with the pencil. I believe that he was responsible for a number of admirably drawn battle scenes which appeared in the *Illustrated London News* during the Crimean war—a period when the art of wood engraving had not yet been destroyed by various processes of photographic reproduction.

Though I disliked the cruelty of the bull fight, the picturesque features connected with it were certainly worth seeing. Nevertheless, when by the ring side I always regretted Longchamps racecourse, where at the same hour on Sundays a more civilized form of sport could be enjoyed.

The most exciting bull fights, it seemed to me, were those in which *novillos*, or young bull fighters, took part. The latter frequently hazarded various daring tricks not seen at the regular fights. One was sitting on a chair in the middle of the ring and avoiding the bull's charge at the last moment—another waiting with a leaping pole till the bull had charged and then leaping over him. This *salto de la garrocha*, as it was called, was



exceedingly dangerous, and a young fellow whom I saw fall on a bull's horns was very seriously hurt.

Another favourite sport in Madrid was cock fighting, the favourite time for which was Sunday morning. There appeared to be two kinds. In one the cocks wore spurs and fought to a finish, in the other they had only nature's weapons and did not kill one another, the victor, as far as I could make out, being the cock who had scored the greatest number of points.

The latter form of cock fighting did not seem to me to be particularly cruel. The cocks apparently enjoyed themselves and were not much the worse when taken out of the pit. I never understood exactly on what principle a cock was adjudged victor.

*Pelota*, which I often went to see, enjoyed great popularity at the time of my sojourn at Madrid. This game, which may be described as a sort of gigantic Fives in a court with two walls, is played by Basque professionals, who are very well paid. A sort of basket-work arrangement worn on the right hand and arm enables a player to sling the ball with tremendous force. There are four players—two forward and two back. The spectators, as far as I could make out, made bets on almost every stroke, the great length of the court affording them time to do so.

I attended a number of functions at the Embassy while I was at Madrid and was present at the Royal Palace when Sir Henry presented his credentials to the Queen-Mother, who was Regent, King Alfonso being then but a child. The scene was not so picturesque as an audience of the Shah at Tehran, still the Hallebardiers in their fine eighteenth century uniforms struck an artistic note.

I also saw the ceremony of feet-washing by the Queen-Mother on Maundy Thursday in Holy Week when, according to an ancient custom, thirteen poor old men, corresponding to the

number of the Apostles, had their toes laved and were afterwards served with a meal from the Royal lady's own hands. As a matter of fact this foot-washing was done in a very perfunctory way and the various dishes for the meal were merely handed to the old men who put them on one side to be taken away to their homes after the ceremony was over.

Old Queen Isabella, of vivacious memory, was present at the ceremony, which I suppose she herself in past days had performed. Unlike the Queen-Regent, who was a pious and highly proper sovereign, Isabella, in her day had been very fond of pleasure and amusement. Though she had had a good many ups and downs she appeared quite happy. Her last years were passed in Paris, where she died.

While in Spain I visited Burgos, Barcelona and other towns. I should rather have liked to have made a tour on some unbeaten tracks, where there were curious old walled cities but travel in Spain in those days was not comfortable, and since I left the Embassy I have never visited the country again.

Since my return from Spain, with the exception of a trip to the Canary Isles in a sailing schooner of one hundred and fifty tons, which in a storm nearly went to the bottom of the Atlantic, I have only been to Italy and France, and after the beginning of the present century, having taken to writing books, I settled down in London, where I continued living with my mother in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, till 1913, in which year, aged eighty-eight, she died.

The best tribute paid to her charm and originality was an article by Mr. Edmund Gosse, for whom, both as a friend and as a writer, she had the greatest admiration. A popular figure in Society, where she never spoke ill of anyone, during a long and happy life she had known most of the prominent people of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Disraeli, Lowe, Cobden, Chamberlain and other great politicians had been her intimate friends.

Taking the greatest interest in science and art she was an omnivorous reader, and understood what she read not only in English but in French, German and Italian, all of which languages she knew fairly well. Her judgments as to certain modern movements were often shrewd.

Towards female suffrage she professed herself indifferent, but thought its introduction would have no terrible results.

Discussing the subject with me, she said: "After all the whole thing is not worth the fuss made about it. If women do get the vote it will make very little difference;" and up to the present time experience has proved that she was right.

Though quite reconciled to many modern developments and keen about mechanical inventions such as the motor-car, she intensely disliked the craze for regulating everything and everybody which even before the outbreak of the Great War was creeping into English life.

Possessing a keen sense of humour and an incisive wit she had made sincere friends among people whose grandparents had been the contemporaries of her youth.

She was one of the last of her generation and had seen political power drift out of the hands of the aristocracy into those of a number of opportunist demagogues in whose sagacity and judgment she had little belief. Nor was she wrong, for a little more than a year after her death occurred the greatest catastrophe which the world has ever seen.

Meanwhile, however, trade was good and money plentiful, while no clouds on the political horizon gave warning of the coming storm. The West End of London, in all probability, had never been gayer or more luxurious than it was in 1914. Though vast armies confronted one another on the other side of the Channel, very few believed that they would ever fight.

"War in modern days," a prosperous business man told me, "was unthinkable; there were too many commercial

interests involved ever to allow such an act of insanity to happen."

Though to all outward appearance Europe seemed peaceful enough, there were not wanting signs that a great upheaval might occur.

I remember a significant incident which at the time impressed me with a vague sense of impending disaster. Before the Great War I frequently went to stay with Baron Eckhardstein, a genial giant—then certainly no enemy to this country—at his house at Shanklin.

For a time the Baron had been *Chargé d'Affaires*, in which capacity he had used all his endeavours to effect an alliance, or at least an *entente*, between Germany and England. His efforts, however, had not been crowned with success, more, I fancy, owing to the unreasonable pretensions of those in authority at the Wilhelm Strasse than from any lack of good will on the part of the British Government.

Anyhow the negotiations, much to the Baron's chagrin, fell through, a totally different policy being pursued. The latter, who was fond of discussing European politics, always maintained that this must sooner or later lead to disaster—the fact was that he possessed far more cleverness (as his recently published book has shown) than most people gave him credit for.

In modern England, where in certain respects the judgment of so-called serious folk is often childish, sitting up late is supposed to denote a frivolous disposition—and the Baron notoriously kept very late hours. Highly original in his ideas he hated restrictions of every kind almost as much indeed as he did golf, a game for which, to the horror of many of his friends, he expressed unmitigated contempt. He could not, as he said, understand sensible people hitting a silly little ball about for two or three hours at a time.

"Voltaire would never have done that!" he would declare.

The author of "Candide," it may be added, was the object of his hearty admiration, which, though also accorded to Frederick the Great, was only extended to the then ruling Kaiser in a somewhat modified degree.

The Baron was most hospitable and his bright little house a very pleasant one to stay in. Though the host went to bed very late he did not expect his guests to do so unless they liked, while he did all he could to make them comfortable.

His parties generally consisted of English people, but on one occasion in 1912 I found myself at "Sans Souci," as his house was called, with the Baron, three other Germans and a Dane.

One of the Germans was a well-known publicist and pamphleteer whose Pan-Germanic writings had attracted some attention. Though quite agreeable from a social point of view he would at times—especially after dinner—assume a very arrogant attitude as to the future of his country.

Speaking in English one evening he said to me :

" Soon we shall spread out—you will see ! "

" Through war ? "

" No ; there will be no war. Europe is too sensible and realizes that no one can resist us. When the proper time comes the territories we want will fall into our hands as ripe fruit falls from the tree. Belgium and perhaps Holland will be ours ; as for France we shall know how to deal with her if she dares to block our way."

" And if England objects ? "

" Bah ! She may object but will never fight. Why, your politicians, everyone of whom is more or less a 'humanity-monger' (as Bismarck called Gladstone), never cease prating of the beauties of peace. They have brought the morale of their country to such a low pitch that now the people would never follow them if they preached anything else—you have had your day ; now it is our turn to have a 'place in the sun.' "

I remarked that the politicians who spent their time spouting humanitarian nonsense scarcely represented the real spirit of England, which could be bellicose enough if roused.

"And if you do fight, what will be the result? You have no army and know nothing of the new inventions we shall employ to annihilate your fleet. Believe me it would be a short affair, which must end in your losing a very great deal, including India, while your colonies would probably break away. Our Emperor and his advisers have taken good care that Deutchland shall be fully prepared to annihilate any adversary who may dare to stand in her path—we wish to get what we want peacefully, but get it we will and shall!"

At this point old Count Bismarck (a distant connection, I believe, of the great Chancellor) intervened and did his best to cast oil upon troubled waters.

He was a charming gentleman of the old school who, as a cavalry officer, had fought in the war of 1870, for which reason he fully realized the blessings of peace.

"God forbid!" said he, "that we should think of fighting with our good friends the English, whom I at least have every reason to like. The more so as indirectly it is to their country that I owe my life.

"Riding through a wood in France with some of my Uhlans, we were suddenly attacked by *francs-tireurs*, and several saddles having been emptied we tried to gallop away when, to our dismay, our progress was stopped by a huge pile of timber which had been thrown across the road. Though apparently insurmountable the English mare I was riding jumped it like a bird. To her I owed my safety, for my men, who could not escape, were killed."

Thus the conversation was turned into a more congenial channel; nevertheless the memory of that evening which remained with me was not a pleasant one. It was as if the shadow of

some gigantic and horrible monster had come before my eyes, and in my subconscious mind there lingered a vague idea of a hideous catastrophe which might before long burst upon the modern world.

Our politicians, no doubt, must have known that the European situation was in reality not as satisfactory as it was generally assumed to be. Nevertheless those who, like the late Lord Roberts, urged the necessity of England being prepared were either called nervous old women or flouted as alarmists.

And then came the crash !

At first even those competent to give an opinion declared it would be but a short affair—Lord Rothschild himself is reported to have said it couldn't last three weeks—but it lasted more than three years !

I cannot say that since 1914 I have had any respect for the public men of my own generation or of that which preceded it—they, in my opinion, were more or less responsible for that act of criminal folly—"the Great War."

Kaiser Wilhelm, a megalomaniac, on the one hand, and English politicians with humanitarian fads, on the other, undoubtedly brought about this most terrible catastrophe in European history. There was possibly more excuse for the Kaiser than for our canting gabblers—after all, he had been brought up to look upon warfare as the finest thing in the world, and had passed his life mainly amid preparations for fighting.

Our politicians knew this, or ought to have known it ; they saw the German armies getting more and more formidable from year to year, yet, canting cravens as they were, they did not dare speak out, but merely prated perpetually of that peace which they must have realized was sooner or later to be broken.

Warning after warning had they received ; nevertheless they turned a deaf ear to expert advice and continued gabbling

while secretly they hoped that the storm might not break in their time.

Sir Fairfax Cartwright, with whom I had been in Persia and Madrid, while Ambassador at Vienna up to 1913 was one of the few who realized exactly what was likely to happen. A clever and astute diplomatist he had long predicted the coming of the Great War and told me that, happening to be travelling abroad when the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated at Serajevo, he at once realized that a European upheaval must be the result.

So deeply convinced was he of this that he then and there sent a cheque to the bank and procured two hundred pounds in gold, so that should hostilities break out he would have less difficulty in getting back to England. His forecast was perfectly correct, though events did not mature quite so quickly as he had anticipated.

Once war was declared, however, things moved with great speed. On the whole, considering the comparatively small amount of attention which the Government had given to the British army, those responsible for its organization had done their duty well.

The original expeditionary force was highly efficient and excellently equipped; had there been more of it the initial success of the German invaders might never have taken place. As it was, owing to great preponderance of numbers, they were able to press triumphantly on till it was reported that their advance guard was practically in sight of the *Tour Eiffel*.

I remember hearing a friend of mine who had just reached England from the Continent declare that it was now almost a question of hours before Paris fell. At one time, indeed, the invading army was so close that the flash of its advancing guns could be seen from the heights of Montmartre.



All sounds of revelry were hushed on "*la butte*" and the Parisians went about silent, sad, and apprehensive of what the morrow might bring forth.

Numbers, including the Government, had betaken themselves out of harm's way to Bordeaux, where they were very appropriately known as "*les tournedos' a la Bordelaise*."

Then it was that the gallant Gallieni (after his death made a Marshal of France) issued his proclamation with its scathing reference to the Ministry.

" ARMY OF PARIS.

" INHABITANTS OF PARIS.

" The members of the Government of the Republic have left Paris in order to give a *new vigour* to the national defence.

" I have received the mandate of defending Paris against the invader.

" This mandate I shall carry out to the end."

---

" Paris, September 3, 1914.

" The Military Governor of Paris commanding the Army of Paris.

GALLIENI."

And well did the grim old soldier fulfil his task.

Owing to his wonderful powers of organization a fresh army, the existence of which the Germans ignored, attacked them when they were getting close to the capital. Fighting with the greatest bravery and determination the French hurled back the invader.

Some of the more imaginative among the latter declared that the spirit of Joan of Arc hovered above the soldiers of France during those eventful days. Never surely had the Maid of Orleans more reason to be proud of her countrymen than in the battle of the Marne, during which thousands of little red-trousered

soldiers were slain, falling, as an eyewitness described it, like poppies stricken by some terrible wind.

People who were in a position to form a sound estimate were optimistic even when things appeared to be going very badly for the allies. I remember the late Mr. Hugh O'Beirne telling me that however long a final decision might be delayed it could never be in favour of Germany.

The untimely death of this charming man and gifted diplomatist was a great loss to England. In his case Fate seemed reluctant to carry out its inevitable decree, for he missed the train by which he should have joined the doomed party on the *Hampshire* and only succeeded in just catching that vessel by taking a special train.

Possessed of an unequalled knowledge of Russia and the Russian language, Mr. O'Beirne, during his comparatively short career, had rendered great services to his country. It was in consideration of this that he was, as a last resource, sent to Bulgaria with, as someone remarked, "sixty pounds and a suit case," in the hope that he might induce Czar Ferdinand to join the allies.

Setting aside the fact that the German representative had been furnished with unlimited funds, the situation had long been considered hopeless by those best able to judge. Had an angel with a flaming sword flown from Petrograd to Sofia he would not have affected the attitude of Bulgaria.

Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, British Minister there, had done his best to make this clear to those responsible for the foreign policy of England. His forecast of what was likely to occur proved entirely accurate, but the unpalatable truth is rarely acceptable to politicians.

General Paget's visit to King Ferdinand, though it was supposed to have been a success, really effected nothing. The gallant soldier in question was, indeed, deceived by the Bulgarian ruler, who wanted, but did not get the Garter.

The policy of Czar Ferdinand, as regards the Great War, was entirely inspired by four Bulgarian Generals who had served in the Russian army and were well aware of its weakness.

Besides this, Ferdinand seems to have nurtured feelings of resentment at not having been treated with sufficient respect on the occasion of King Edward's funeral.

The ceremony in question had left an unpleasant impression upon the monarch's mind, for his subjects, thinking he wasn't going to be asked, had almost openly expressed their contempt for a king whom they declared wasn't even thought worth the invitation which he finally did receive.

At one time I tried to note down all the ridiculous rumours which were current after hostilities had begun, but the task was too much for me and I gave it up. The credulity of the mob remains much the same throughout the ages—a notable instance was the case of the Russian army which during the war was confidently asserted to have passed through England.

The origin of the report in question was the receipt of a telegram by a large wholesale egg dealer in Leadenhall market, which ran: "Eighty thousand Russians arrived at Dundee." Much satisfied with this news, which referred to a consignment of eggs somewhat overdue, he carelessly threw the wire on the ground.

Someone who chanced to pick it up, casting his eyes over it, at once jumped to the conclusion that the eighty thousand meant soldiers, and at once communicated the good news to his friends. Gradually the rumour, cleverly used as propaganda by the authorities, spread all over the country, and before long (so great is the power of the imagination) scores of people declared that they had actually seen trains full of Russians passing through stations and standing in sidings. Some excited individuals went so far as to say that they knew the soldiers were Russians because a number of them still had snow upon their coats and caps.

The arrival of a few Russian officers who were seen about London did much to make the people believe a report in which, as a matter of fact, there was not one word of truth.

The first Zeppelin raid in London, in the West End at least, was regarded with considerable indifference. The evening it occurred I happened to be playing piquet in a club in Piccadilly. Suddenly bang, bang, went the guns in the Green Park over the road outside. I did not much like this and said to my opponent, a well-known figure in the sporting world :

" I think we had better declare this game a draw."

" What rubbish ! " said he. " I mean to finish the game. I wish, however, they would cease firing those silly little pop-guns, which can't possibly hit anything."

He was quite right, for the small cannon in question, proving utterly useless, were soon after replaced by more powerful artillery. The firing continued and someone rushing into the cardroom said :

" They're just overhead, they're just overhead ! "

" What's overhead ? " enquired my opponent.

" The Zeppelins, of course."

" Oh ! do shut up about those things and leave us to play our game in peace—if we're bombed, we're bombed and there's an end to it."

Eventually, to my relief, I lost the game, and having declined to take my revenge I went out to see if I could get a glimpse of the aerial invaders.

Meanwhile, my late antagonist, not having been able to get anyone to play, moodily strolled out into the night murmuring something about nervous idiots who got upset about nothing.

At the beginning of the war, being a good deal over military age, I looked about for some way in which I might make myself useful. Unfortunately the authorities, instead of mobilizing

everyone for civilian service as they should have done, devoted their energies to discouraging people from helping.

Had a more sensible course been adopted, an enormous sum of money would have been saved to the taxpayer, for as the contest dragged on people received very handsome pay for work which, under a wiser system, would have been performed at little or no cost. A general mobilization of men and women who might have been called upon to undertake any task allotted to them would have been a very proper thing; only persons likely to be of real use need have been employed.

After having looked about in vain, I was at last accepted as a voluntary worker in Lord Roberts' Field-glass Distributing Depôt in Palace Street, Westminster, which did very useful work under the direction of Lt.-Colonel Browning.

The response of the public was quite admirable, every day numerous cases of field-glasses being received, most of which were of high quality. The glasses were of every size and kind; a large quantity sent by sporting men were of great use, but now and then we would get mother-of-pearl-mounted opera-glasses from ladies which, though testifying to the patriotism of the senders, were absolutely useless for soldiers about to take the field.

One sent a tiny pistol and several people forwarded revolvers and swords, some of which we gave to officers going to the front. Pathetic little notes reached us almost every day, from male or female well-wishers of small means who were keenly anxious to help.

The number of glasses sent out to our troops was very large, care being taken that they should be properly distributed. Unfortunately, a large consignment presented by us to the Belgian army only reached its destination just as Antwerp fell into the hands of the foe.

Every glass, it may be added, was stamped in such a way that it could be returned to its original owner after the war;

yet, it is to be feared that not many of the great number which passed through Palace Street ever came back to England again. Nevertheless, those who sent them have the consolation of knowing that their generosity was of real use in the early days of the war. No provision for the supply of field-glasses to officers had been made by the military authorities, and without the aid of Lord Roberts' organization our troops would have been sadly handicapped in their struggle with a better equipped opponent.

As the war wore on, there ceasing to be a need for workers in the field-glass department, I was drafted into a letter-censoring department, also in Palace Street, Westminster. The work here was very efficiently and carefully conducted, the chief censors being men of high mental capacity, in addition to which a number of clever University Dons rendered valuable aid. Everything was done in a most businesslike manner and, as far as I could see, the chance of undesirable information being conveyed in correspondence reduced to a minimum. The sort of work we were engaged upon soon becomes a very tedious task; indeed, the weariness of wading through multitudes of missives would soon cure the most incorrigible Paul Pry of all desire to read his neighbour's letters.

I suppose most of the people who wrote were well aware that their effusions would be subjected to rigorous inspection. In any case very few at all let themselves go, the two most popular topics touched upon being details of what they had recently had for lunch or dinner and descriptions of their own ailments or those of their relatives.

To judge by a number of these effusions, the permanent condition of a large part of the population was one of ill-health. A number of writers evidently took a positive pleasure in recounting their symptoms, which too often, I am afraid, resulted from the enormous amount of food which they gloated over having eaten.

Now and then an insulting reference to the censorship would occur. "I hope the Censor will read this carefully through," wrote one, "I don't think the nosing old devil will find anything to object to."

Others were even more emphatic in expressing their dislike for the officials through whose hands they knew their letters would pass.

Only an infinitesimal amount of correspondence was prevented from reaching its destination. Occasionally some letter which bore suspicious markings was held over for expert examination, but in the great proportion of cases even these were eventually sent on.

The course adopted in the particular department to which I belonged was to sort the letters into three categories as they were read. Obviously innocent correspondence was passed through at once, letters which contained queer expressions or unnecessary dots, possibly connected with a cypher, were retained for careful investigation, any missive which gave strong grounds for suspicion was passed on to the censors-in-chief.

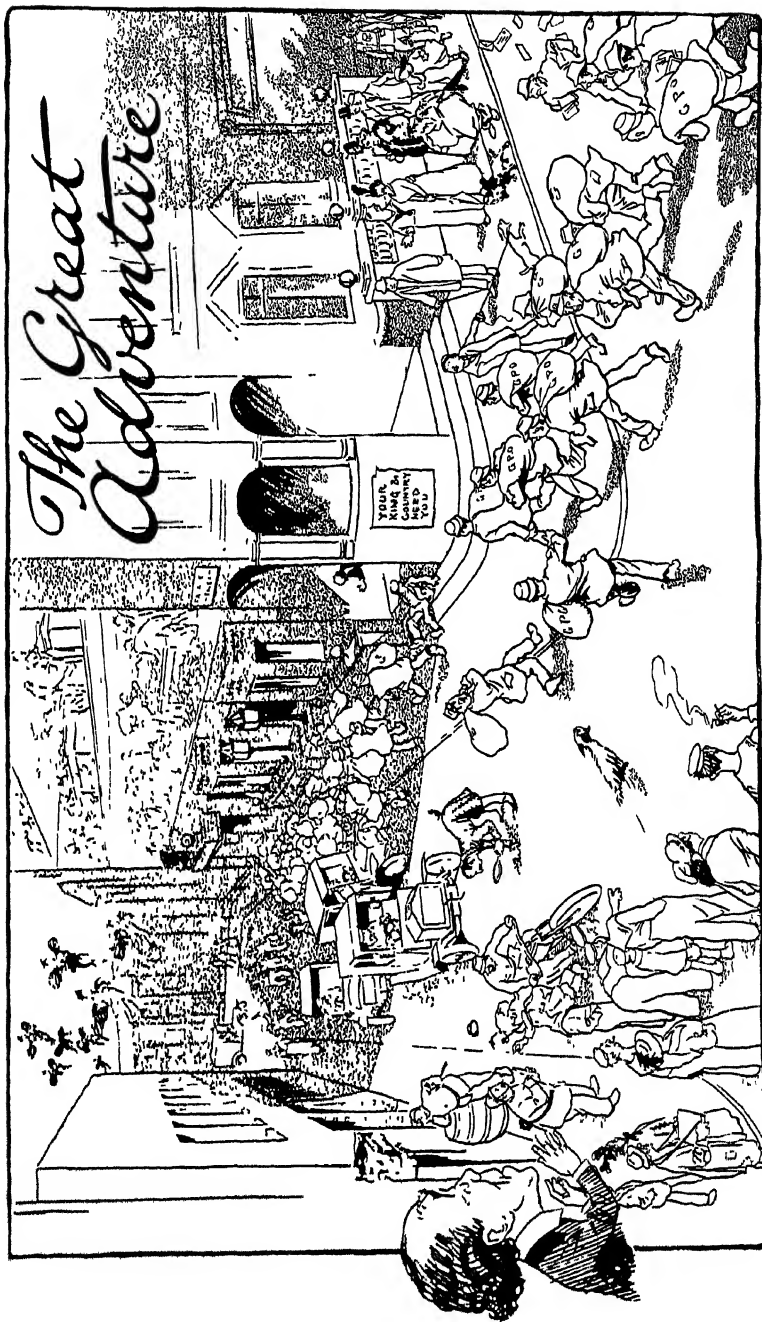
On the whole I think the system worked well; there was certainly no carelessness among the censors, who, at the same time, did everything they could not to interfere with the public's convenience.

After a time, owing to the kindly offices of my friend, Commander Serocold, a very able assistant of Captain Hall, I was allotted a post as *liaison* officer between the Admiralty and the Military Permit Office in Bedford Square, where all persons leaving England had to obtain a *visa*.

The office in question was under the direction of \*Major (now Lt.-Colonel) Waterhouse, a most capable officer. Owing to the system he devised I should say that a very minute proportion of undesirables slipped through our hands.

---

\* Now (November, 1922) principal private secretary to Mr. Bonar Law.



LETTER CENSORING, 1915

The figure on the left is Mr. McKenna





Every day I had to examine and grant or refuse a *visa* to from eighty to a hundred persons—I came in contact with all sorts of people. One applicant, I remember, bore a well-known Huguenot name. After the requisite formalities had been gone through I mentioned this to him, at the same time expressing my great interest in Huguenot history, and enquiring if his family possessed any records?

“My ancestors,” replied he, “as you have rightly divined, came over from France to escape persecution on account of their faith, which, for some reason or other, both my parents chose to abandon—they are fanatical Catholics. As for myself, I don’t care a damn about any religion.”

In his case, at least, all the excitement about Protestantism and Catholicism seemed to have been entirely wasted.

For the most part the men and women who applied for *visas* were reasonable enough. Occasionally, however, a business man in a hurry, or a spoilt lady used to having her own way, would try and expedite matters by saying that she knew Mr. Lloyd George or some other Cabinet Minister. The result, however, was always exactly opposite to what they had anticipated. We stuck to our instructions and declined to be either threatened or cajoled.

Whenever it was possible I did all I could for people of small means—I still think with satisfaction of having (by stretching the regulations) passed to France a poor, humble little waitress anxious to go and see her lover, a cook who had obtained leave from his Colonel to spend a few days in Paris.

On the whole people seemed to be grateful to the passport officers. On one occasion an Australian family, who had excellent reasons for going abroad, having been passed by me, I observed the father looking very closely at my initials, “R. N.,” which I put beneath the *visas*.

After the passports had been returned, he held a sort of little conference at the other end of the room, after which he came up to my desk and said :

"Sir, as Australians, we wish to thank you for having been so civil and accommodating as regards our *visas*, and also to express our high appreciation of the services rendered by the Royal Navy to which you belong."

The "R. N." had done it.

Though somewhat taken aback I rose to my feet, shook him by the hand and said :

"I thank you for your generous appreciation of the British navy. You may rely upon it always doing its duty."

This non-committal statement, considering that I really did belong to a branch of the navy, "the Intelligence Division," was, I thought, not going too far.

A certain regulation stringently forbade a husband and wife crossing over to France together, the idea being that one of the two was quite enough to transact any necessary business.

Among my clients appeared a man and a woman who told me they were very anxious to get to Paris. In reply to the question of business or pleasure they said, "Business," and then proceeded to explain to me what that business was.

Before handing me their passports I observed that the couple appeared very agitated. At length the man said :

"I have a very serious confession to make to you, sir ; I must tell you we are not married."

"Well," said I, "under the present peculiar circumstances it's jolly lucky for you both you're not. As it is, if your passports are in order you can go, were you married you couldn't."

They went away quite happy with their *visas*.

After some time passed at the Military Permit Office I was given work to do in the library of the Admiralty, situated in the upper part of the building though not so high up as

"Zeppelin Terrace," as the still standing temporary erections on the roof were called.

Before long, however, I came downstairs, having been promoted to be assistant to Lord Herschell, who most efficiently filled an important position in the Intelligence Division under Captain (now Rear Admiral Sir Reginald) Hall.

I suppose the public will never know how much they owe to this clever and astute sailor, who contributed in such a great measure towards the victory of the Allies. Of many interesting and sometimes astonishing *coups* carried out under his direction I am unable to speak—as an organizer of Secret Service he stood quite alone.

He often played the Germans disconcerting tricks. On one occasion a few numbers of a leading "Daily" were specially printed to contain a prominent paragraph not to be found in the ordinary issue.

The paragraph in question described how a flotilla of flat-bottomed boats lay ready to convey a large force of troops to the Belgian coast, a great attack on which might be expected at any moment. By the aid of reliable agents these faked copies were shown, as if by chance, to certain persons who, there was reason to believe, had means of communicating with the enemy.

The bait took, for that very night and for days later the Germans held a large force ready to repel what they evidently considered would be a formidable attempt at landing. To their surprise none was ever made. Their great preparations were wasted and their efforts diverted from other quarters where they would have been really effective.

This was by no means the only occasion upon which a newspaper, working in connection with the Intelligence Division, rendered valuable aid.

It was, of course, important for the latter to keep itself posted as to exactly what the Germans wanted to know, and, in 1918,

from papers found upon captured spies, it appeared that confirmation of a report that submarines were guarding British convoys was then being anxiously sought.

With a view to strengthening this idea, a paragraph appeared in *The Times* to the effect that one of our "Convoy Escort Submarines" reports having sunk a German submarine on such and such a date."

A week or two later the Intelligence Division secured from one of the latter, which actually had been sunk, confidential papers containing a secret report, quoting this paragraph and stating that as the existence of "British Submarine Escorts" was confirmed from official sources, great care must be exercised in making attacks.

The real truth was that submarines never accompanied our convoys to which the report served as a valuable additional protection.

\* \* \* \* \*

The thunder of the guns is hushed and the vast armies of the Great War have melted away. London, to some extent, is its old self, while Paris once more welcomes the pleasure-seeker.

From time to time I make my way to that pleasant city, and in spite of increasing years enjoy its facile pleasures almost as much as in my Cambridge days.

At times, however, I like to dine quietly at some old-fashioned café, where I can muse over the vicissitudes of what, on the whole, has been a not unpleasant life.

I think of my old friends

*"les gracieux gallans  
Que je suivoie au temps jadis  
Si bien chantans, si bien parlans,  
Si plaisans en faictz et en dictz,"*

and drink a silent toast to those of them who have gone to the "land of no laughter."

Nor do I forget to raise my glass while I recall to mind some of the charming sex with whom I have passed delightful hours.

So I take leave of my readers with the hope that they will be lenient to one who, conscious of many shortcomings, in the words of the old French poet

*"Crye à toutes gens merciz."*



# INDEX

	Page		Page
Abdul Hamid, Sultan ..	120, 122, 156	Bullingdon Club ..	80
Adams, Doctor ..	82, 83	Butterflies ..	27, 28
Ailesbury, Maria, Marchioness of ..	33	Calmette, Gaston ..	275
Ailesbury, Marquis of ..	108-110	Camel Fight, A ..	190
His Wife ..	108, 109	Canary Isles, Author's voyage	
Ainslie, Mr. Douglas ..	55	to, in a sailing schooner ..	301
Albert, Fred ..	233	Cancan Dancers 101, 102, 287, 288	
Albert Hall, The ..	17	Carnarvon, Lord ..	55
Alfonso, King ..	300	Carnot, Funeral of President ..	281
Ali (Author's black servant) ..	162, 163	Cartwright, Sir Chauncy 115, 129, 150	
Amphitryon, The ..	222	Cartwright, Sir Fairfax ..	150, 176
Andreini, General ..	139		200, 307
Arabian Nights, Burton's ..	194	Casvin ..	130
Athenæum (Dining Club) ..	80	Chesterfield, Lady ..	34
Baabism ..	149	Chetwynd, Sir George ..	94, 96
Baktiaris ..	175, 176	Chevalier, Mr. Albert ..	233
Baku ..	128, 203	Chocolates, anecdote ..	19, 20
"Bast" ..	142, 163	Christianity in Japan ..	258
Batoum ..	123	Churches in Sussex ..	31, 32
Bax-Ironside, Sir Henry 150, 184, 309		Churchill, Lord Randolph ..	35
Beaconsfield, Lord ..	34, 35	Churchill, Mr. Sydney 128, 150, 151, 200	
Beaconsfield, Lady ..	15	Circassian girl accompanies Shah	
Beefsteak (Cambridge Dining		to England ..	206, 207
Club) ..	80, 81	Ciro's ..	226
Beerbohm Tree, Sir Herbert ..	235	Clarence, Duke of ..	203
Bellwood, Miss Bessie ..	232	Clanrikarde, Lord ..	37, 38
Benson, Mr. A. C. ..	71-73	Clarke-Thornhill, Mr. Bryan 260, 261	
Berkeley Chapel ..	18	Cocottes, idiosyncracies of	
Bernal Osborne, Mr. ..	36	Parisian ..	284-286
Bernstorff, Count ..	18	Coburn, Mr. Charles ..	233
Bligh, Hon. Arthur ..	55	Coleman, "Fatty" ..	223, 224
Blumer, Captain ..	154	Constantinople, ..	120-122
Bohemian London, Author's ex-		"Continental," The ..	218
periences of in 1889, 1890, 217-237		Continental (Restaurant) ..	218
Bookmakers, Parisian ..	105	Corlett, Mr. John ..	219, 220
Bosville, Sir Alexander Mac-		Corinthian Club ..	217, 226
donald of the Isles, Bart. ..	53, 54	Corney Grain, Mr. ..	234
Boulanger, General 102-104, 277, 278		Cossacks, Persian ..	133-135
Bouchier, Mr. Arthur ..	55	Cottenham, Author rides race at 84-87	
Bournemouth ..	24-27	Crammer's, Author at a ..	67, 68
Bokhara ..	116, 117	Crowe, Sir Joseph ..	299
Boldi ..	280	Curzon, Marquis ..	54, 203
Bradlaugh, Mr. ..	119	Cust, Mr. Harry ..	55
Bridge, Game of ..	139	Darwin, Charles ..	21
Bridgeman, Rt. Hon. W. C. ..	55	Deauville ..	107, 108
Brighton, Persians at ..	209-211	Delmonico's ..	270
Browne, Professor ..	149	Dieppe ..	110
Browning, Lt.-Col. ..	312	Dinner, Menu of Japanese ..	264
Bull Fights at Madrid ..	298-300	Diplomats at Tehran in 1888 154-158	



	Page		Page
Dolgorouki, Prince	154, 155, 156, 161	Greenfield, Katie	158, 159
Dreyfus Case, The	289, 290	Guinness, Mr.	180
Drummond Wolff, Sir Henry		Hall, Rear Admiral Sir Reginald	317
27, 34, 111, 112, 115, 118-120, 126,		Hamadan, Author stays with	
129, 131, 143, 148, 158, 159, 161,		American Missionary at	190-193
199, 200, 204, 214, 297, 300		Harcourt, Lord	55
Duleep Singh, Prince Victor	54	Harcourt, Sir William	15
Duleep Singh, Prince Frederick	54	Hearn, Lafcadio	246
Dunkellin, Lord	38	Heathfield	29
Letters to Sir William Gregory	38-40	Herring, Mr.	95
Durand's, Parisian Restaurant	274-278	Herschell, Lord	317
Eckhardstein, Baron	303, 304	Holland, Hon. Lionel	85
Visit of the Author to	304, 305	Hong Kong	242
Edward VII	203, 204	Hooker, Sir William	14
Ellis, General Sir Arthur	204	Hornby, Dr.	47, 48
Embassy, Club	226, 227	Hornidge, Mr., his Wager	88, 89
Empire, Music Hall, Opening of	112	Hotelkeeper, jovial Japanese at	
Enoshima	268	Kioto	264, 265
Escott, Mr. T. H.	34	His Costume	264
Eton, the Author at	43-57	Iddesleigh, Lord	35
Eton, Education in the 'eighties		Ieyasu, Shogun	254, 255
	46, 47	Intelligence Division of the	
Eton Masters	49	Admiralty, the Author in	317, 318
Eton, Mission	46	Ispahan, Author's visit to	172-178
European Dress, Japanese		Maidan	173
mania for	242, 243, 261, 268	Palace of Chihil Situn	173, 177
Fath Ali Shah	141	Old Bridge	173
Featherstonhaugh, Lady	19	Ito, Prince	242
Fenton, Mr. de Wend	220	Japan, Author's sojourn in	242-268
Fierté (racehorse)	110, 111	"Jimmie's" (St. James's	
Fitzwilliam, Mr. George	55	Restaurant)	218, 219
Fourth Party, The	34, 35	Jingoro	255
Franco-German War of 1870	17, 18	John Kino	253, 254
Gallieni, Proclamation of		Joynes, Rev. J. L.	49
Marshal	308	Jubilee Jugguns	93-94
Gallifet, General de	104	Julfa	172, 174
Gambling in France	290, 291, 293	Karun, River	148, 214
Gardinia Club	217, 225, 226	Kennedy, Sir Robert	151
Geishas	252, 253, 256, 260, 266, 267	Kerman	194
Geisler, General	139	Kersage (racehorse)	106
Geok Tepe	184, 186	Khalil Khalid Bey	156, 157
George V	203	Kharzan Pass	129, 130
Gill, Mr. A. E.	70	Kimi San	250, 261, 262
Gleig, Rev. Mr.	34	Kingsley, Charles	73
Godfrey, Charles	232	Kioto	263
Gods, Japanese	258-260	Author's stay in Japanese	
Golf	83, 84, 303	Hotel at	263-267
Goodford, Rev. Dr.	50	Rambles in	265
Gosse, Mr. Edmund	301	Kohrud Pass	172
Grand Dukes, Russian	282	Kum	214
Anecdote	283, 284	Lansdell, Dr.	124
Great War, The coming of	302, 303	Law, the late Sir Edward	171, 172
	306		177-179
Its Outbreak	307	Letter Censoring, the Author's	
Ridiculous rumours	310	experiences of	313, 314
The first Zeppelin raid	311	Leybourne, George	232
Author's work during	312-318	Liberty, Statue of	270

	Page		Page
Liss .. ..	14, 21	Odessa .. ..	203
Liverpool .. ..	207, 209	Odling, Dr. and Mrs. .. ..	151
Lloyd, Miss Marie .. ..	232	Omar Khayam .. ..	184
Loti, Pierre .. ..	246	Opéra Comique, Burning of .. ..	100
Lowe, Robert .. ..	34	Paris, Author's first visit to .. ..	58-63
Lowther, Hon. Lancelot .. ..	70	In the 'eighties .. ..	77, 98-103
Lytton, first Lord .. ..	104	Racing near .. ..	105-107, 112
Macdermott, "The Great" .. ..	231	In the 'nineties .. ..	273-289
Maclean, Sir John .. ..	189	Parnell .. ..	73, 74
Madrid, Author Attaché at .. ..	297-301	Patrick, Rev. Mr. .. ..	69, 76
Magdalene College, Cambridge, .. ..		Paulus .. ..	59, 103
Author an Undergraduate at .. ..	68-89	Peacock Throne .. ..	141
Mascot, The Shah's .. ..	207, 208	Pelota .. ..	300
Maude, late General .. ..	55	Penrose, Mr. Francis .. ..	74
Meshed .. ..	184, 186, 189, 190	Pepys, Samuel .. ..	71, 72
Miakodori, a Japanese dance .. ..	266	Perkins, Mr. (Tutor of Downing .. ..	82, 83
Mikado .. ..	246, 247, 248	College) .. ..	85-87
Milner, Mr. .. ..	85	Ping Pong (pony) .. ..	22-24
Military Permit Office, the .. ..		Portsmouth in the 'seventies .. ..	24-28
Author's experiences at .. ..	314-316	Ravenswood (Private School) .. ..	55
Missionaries in the East .. ..	191, 192	Rawlinson, General Lord .. ..	217-221, 278-280
Mivart, Professor .. ..	21	Restaurants .. ..	221, 222
Monte Carlo, the Author's .. ..		Restaurant Clubs .. ..	167, 214
experiences at .. ..	291, 292	Reuter, Baron George de .. ..	84, 85
Monteforte, Comte de .. ..	134, 159-161	Revelstoke, Lord .. ..	56, 57
Mori, Viscount .. ..	257	Roberts, Lord .. ..	269
Morris Dancers .. ..	13	Rocky Mountains, The .. ..	104
Moseley, Mr. H. N. .. ..	29, 30	Rodd, Sir Rennell .. ..	
Moulton, Lord .. ..	275	Rodolphe, watchmaker of Shah .. ..	
Moxim Khan .. ..	121	Abbass .. ..	172
Music-Halls of the past .. ..	230-234	Rogate .. ..	14
Nadir Ali Khan (Gholam) .. ..	171, 184, 190	Romano's .. ..	219, 220
Nagoya, Daimio's Castle at .. ..	267, 268	Rudbar .. ..	201
Naib-es-Sultaneh, Commander- .. ..		Rye .. ..	31
in-Chief of Persian Army .. ..	134	Salisbury, Lord .. ..	96, 111, 112, 119, 159
Nash, "Jolly John" .. ..	232	200, 213, 292, 293	
Nasr-ed-Din, Shah .. ..	18, 132, 140-143, .. ..	San Francisco .. ..	269
145, 147, 148, 149, 180, 199, 209		Palace Hotel at .. ..	269
Arrives in London .. ..	203, 205, 207-209	Savoy Restaurant .. ..	221
Visits English country houses .. ..	211-212	Schindler, General Hootum .. ..	153
His Farewell of Queen Victoria .. ..	212	Sebastopol, Author visits battle- .. ..	
His Death .. ..	213	fields of .. ..	203
His Policy as a Persian Ruler .. ..	212, 213	Selamluk, Author sees Abdul .. ..	
Nelson .. ..	23	Hamid at .. ..	122
Nevill, Lady Dorothy .. ..	301, 302	Serocold, Commander .. ..	314
Neville, The Hon. and Rev., .. ..		Shah Abdul Azim .. ..	169
Master of Magdalene College .. ..	76	Shahzada of Afghanistan .. ..	210
Night Clubs .. ..	222-227	Sheffield .. ..	210
Nikko .. ..	246, 250-263	Shintoism .. ..	257
Festival at .. ..	255, 256	Shogun, The Last .. ..	247
Author's house at .. ..	251, 260	Skobelev, General .. ..	125, 155, 186
Nishapur .. ..	184	Sladen, Mr. Douglas .. ..	269
No Roos .. ..	140	Sneyd, Lt.-Col. .. ..	87
O'Beirne, Mr. Hugh .. ..	309	Southsea .. ..	22-24
Odawara .. ..	266	Spinning House .. ..	70
		<i>Sporting Times, The</i> .. ..	219, 220
		Stephen, Sir A. Condie .. ..	185

	Page		Page
Stratfieldsaye, Author's recol- lections of .. ..	33, 34	Tyrwitt, Hon. L. .. ..	70
Sufeed Rud (river), Author's trip down .. ..	201-203	United States, Author's impres- sions of the .. ..	269, 270
Sykes, Sir Maik .. ..	192	<i>Umbria</i> (steamship) .. ..	270
Sylvain, M. .. ..	276-278	Up Park .. ..	18, 19
Talbot, Major .. ..	167	Uyeda .. ..	246, 249, 262, 268
Talbot, Colonel the Hon. Reginald .. ..	168	Verrey's Restaurant .. ..	218
Tarver, Mr. Frank .. ..	51, 52	Victoria, Queen .. ..	56, 57
Tarver, Mr. Harry .. ..	51	Author witnesses her Farewell to the Shah .. ..	212
Tehran, Author as Attaché at ..	131-195	Walpole, Lady Georgiana .. ..	116
Rides race at .. ..	181	Walpole, Sir Robert .. ..	14
Tennant, Rt. Hon. H. J. .. ..	56	Waterhouse, Lt.-Col. .. ..	314
Theatie, The, in Japan .. ..	265	Wellington, second Duke of ..	33, 34
Theatrical recollections of the Author .. ..	234, 235	Wells, Lt.-Col. .. ..	151
Thompson, Mr. Ringler .. ..	189	Weppner, Miss Margaret .. ..	245
Tiflis, Author's experiences at ..	123-128	White, Sir William .. ..	120
Toio San .. ..	250, 256	Whiteley, Mr. George, K.C. ..	52
Her Religion .. ..	256, 257	Willette .. ..	281, 282
Idiosyncracies of .. ..	261, 262, 265	Wolff, Dr. Joseph .. ..	115-118
Her dress .. ..	265, 266	Women, Persian .. ..	145-147
Her adieu .. ..	268	Costume of .. ..	146
Tokio .. ..	246, 249	Yezd .. ..	194
Tokugawa Dynasty .. ..	247	Yokohama .. ..	241, 260, 267
Trouville .. ..	107, 110	Yoshida, Mr. Isaburo (Japanese Diplomat) .. ..	259, 260
True Blue Dining Club .. ..	82	Yoshiwara, The .. ..	248, 249
Turkomans, The .. ..	125, 154, 155 184, 186, 190	Zal es Sultan .. ..	154, 176-178





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